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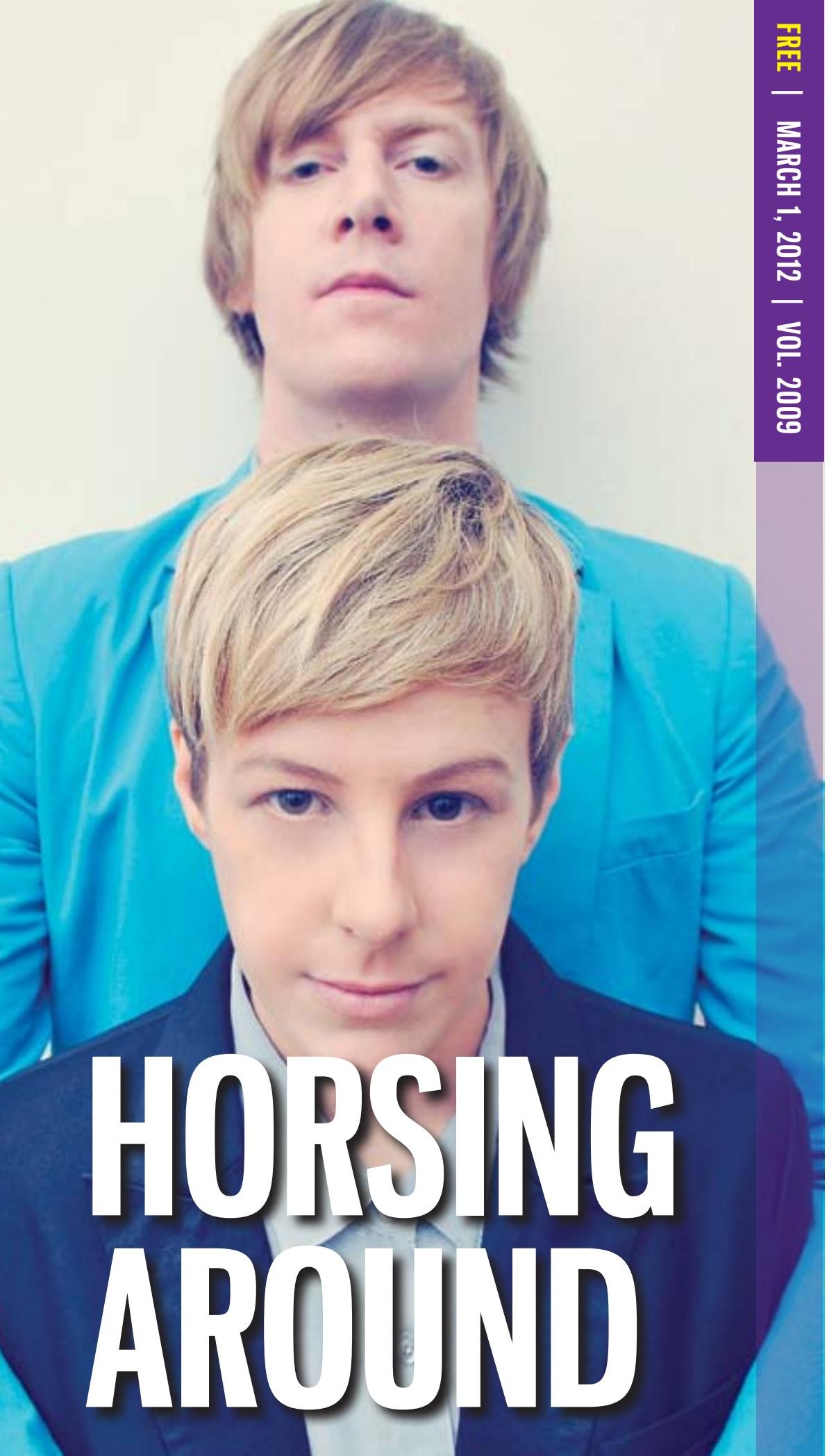
HERMAN MILLER MAKES
BEST OF WORKPLACE LIST

OUT FRONTWOMAN
TALKS INDIE DUO'S
CAREER PATH



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A close-up portrait of a young man with blonde hair, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. He is wearing a bright blue jacket over a dark shirt. The background is plain and light-colored.

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ALL-YOU-CAN-SEE BUFFET.

Friday Night Live!

Ashley Bathgate, cellist for Bang on a Can All-Stars, performs contemporary music with New Music Detroit's Ian Ding. 7 and 8:30 p.m. in Rivera Court

Family Sunday

Celebrate Japanese Girls' Day with *ikebana* demonstrations, a tea ceremony, *furoshiki* wrapping and kimono sash tying.

Sunday Music Bar

Michael Chikuzen Gould performs on the shakuhachi, a Japanese flute made of bamboo. 1 and 3 p.m. in Kresge Court

Now on View

Detroit Revealed: Photographs 2000-2010,
through April 29

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Herman Miller workplace group. Photo courtesy of Rick Westra.

FOCUS: Herman Miller one of six Michigan companies to make HRC Best of List in 2012

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

Each year the Human Rights Campaign comes out with their Best Places to Work for LGBT Equality list, and this year the criteria was more stringent, including the requirement for transgender inclusiveness in healthcare coverage.

Despite the new requirements, six Michigan companies were able to get a perfect score: Chrysler LLC in Auburn Hills, Dow Chemical in Midland, Ford Motor Company in Dearborn, Herman Miller Inc. in Zeeland, Kellogg Co. in Battle Creek and Whirlpool in Benton Harbor. GM had previously been 100 percent but dropped to a score of 85 out of a potential 100 because of the new healthcare insurance standards.

Rick Westra has been with Herman Miller, the Zeeland-based office furniture manufacturer, for 24 years. The product specialist has seen the company grow and become more diverse, even amid a West Michigan culture that isn't known for its inclusiveness.

"Like many companies years ago, they didn't have benefits. I wasn't out when I first went to work there," he said.

"It's been an evolution over the years. I was out to close team members many years ago, but I came out more openly in a diversity class in the mid 1990s. That was our first go-round. At that time Herman Miller recognized the need for diversity and several affinity groups were formed, including a women's group, a black group, a Hispanic group, and of course an LGBT group. It was like you opened the door and we walked through it. I don't think they were expecting it."

"In Zeeland we put up a display in the cafeteria in June of famous LGBT people throughout history. One of the guys had a connection at a printer so we had some great posters; it was just a fabulous display. And it was controversial. A petition went around asking the company to take it down. The management said that we were an established affinity group and they let it stay through the month. But yeah, there were problems. And there still are some people who don't like it."

"Six years ago, senior management recognized that we needed to be welcoming in order to attract the best talent. We formed 'Inclusive Management' teams and

asked people 'How do we attract members of your group to work here?'"

Westra said that within 24 hours of being asked to pull together a team of LGBT employees, one was assembled and ready to go. "They gave us surveys and asked us what gay and transgender employees wanted. We told them what we need is benefits, we need to have an EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) Statement and we want Herman Miller to make the HRC list."

"We thought it would be an insurmountable mountain, and that we'd end up with months and months of arguments and pushing. But we told them what we wanted, and they said 'ok, here.'"

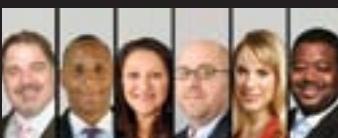
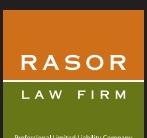
Herman Miller continues to have LGBT displays in the cafeteria in June, and they sponsor events like West Michigan Pride and the Spring Concert for the West Michigan Men's Chorus. And the company meets all of the criteria to be one of HRC's best companies.

Company spokesperson Mark Schurman is proud of Herman Miller's heritage

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Time to re-write policy

Ruth Ellis Center plays key role in upcoming White House visit

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

DETROIT — The White House Office of Public Engagement in partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, working with the Ruth Ellis Center, will be in Detroit to help area agencies and housing providers at a forum March 9 tackling the new federal non-discrimination rule that will go into effect on March 5. The rule, published Feb. 3, entitles access to housing regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. It also prohibits lenders and other entities from inquiring about gender identity or sexual orientation. The rule only applies to entities that receive HUD assistance or are insured through FHA.

"I think it's especially timely for our city," said Laura Hughes, executive director of REC. "Nationally, about 40 percent of the 1.7 million runaway and homeless youth self-identify as LGBTQ. In Detroit alone, up to an estimated 800 homeless LGBT youth are on the streets every day. REC works daily with our city's and state's leadership to help improve outcomes for the homeless LGBTQ youth we serve. It sends a powerful message to now have the commitment from the Federal government to discuss these issues."

The White House is making LGBT issues a priority this spring with a series of conferences planned around the country. The March 9 LGBT Conference on Housing & Homelessness will be held at Wayne State University from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. It is the second in the planned series. The first conference was held Feb. 16 in Philadelphia and focused on LGBT health needs.

The WSU conference will feature remarks by HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan. Additional presenters include HUD Assistant Secretaries John Trasviña, Raphael Bostic, and Mercedes Marquez, as well as Bryan Samuels, commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth, & Families at the Department of Health & Human Services.

HUD and the White House have partnered with the REC and hope to demonstrate the need for better housing opportunities. It will give area agencies an opportunity to consider how current policies might conflict with the new rule.



REC Executive Director Laura Hughes

The official itinerary has not yet been released, but the program is expected to have a series of workshops on housing issues, including information from REC, which is one of only four shelters in the nation serving LGBTQ youth.

"We hope that people who come will be service providers, especially those that receive HUD dollars, as well as people in the LGBT community," said Hughes. "We're inviting a mix of people involved in the community so we can have good conversations. We want these folks to interact and see why it's important to have LGBTQ needs met. The duty of the conference is, it really is about gays, but it's a great opportunity to bring others who have never sat down and looked at their policies. Agencies have realized there aren't LGBTQ issues addressed in their policies, but now they need to address them. So it's an opportunity to really look at the care they are providing to this community," she said.

Hughes explained that many agencies have operated with good intentions, but their policies have unintended discrimination outcomes.

"One example, most recently, was a community provider for transitional housing. They are an agency that only accepts family, but their policy did not have wording protecting gay couples as family. In situations like that it will be really great to have HUD on sight to have them cover what this rule means. This gives people a chance to talk about their policies and will show them not only how to comply with the new rule, but how to be welcoming and inclusive. These aren't necessarily groups that are jerks. It's that their policies are worded in a way they are discriminating unintentionally."

Hughes said the involvement of REC in the conference is important to the shelter. REC currently helps youth ages 13-24, who are homeless or runaway youth, with housing. Their drop-in center helped 4,309 young people last year alone.

"The White House recognizes the work we are doing, and we're proud to be part of this historic conference," said Hughes.

To learn more about what the White House is doing to further the support of the gay, queer and transgender communities, go to www.whitehouse.gov/issues/civil-rights.

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Thinking Out Loud

Time heals no wounds: Why waiting for LGBT equality is a waste of time

BY ABBY DEES



While my home state of California is still wrestling with whether allowing gay marriage will send us floating into the Pacific, other states have seen the light and are moving into the 21st century. If voter initiatives don't ruin it, Maryland and Washington are set to be the seventh and eighth states to recognize same-sex marriage.

Thus it appears that we are generally moving forward, however much the fear mongers are trying to stop us. This seems right, of course, and how things often evolve: in a gentle, steady climb upward, punctuated by a few setbacks but thankfully more victories in the end. Sooner or later, fairness will prevail. It just takes time.

Yeah, right.

The idea that positive change will always happen "in time" might be the most self-destructive idea there is. It's a ubiquitous American history trope, and how I learned (or failed to learn) history in high school: The past was mired in myth and darkness, but we evolved steadily in an upward journey toward enlightenment.

Cultural progress is a foregone conclusion. When we imagine that thirty years from now we'll all be wondering what the big deal was, way back when, about LGBT rights, we are invoking this same idea. It's sort of like saying, "Can you believe we once had segregation?" Sometimes, remembering our ancestors' ignorance can make us feel good about ourselves now. For example, and with all due respect to amazing actresses in The Help, I felt like that film was supposed to make me feel good about not being a racist without me actually having to do anything.

That's all right to an extent – such tales about our past can remind us of our shared values. The problem with this kind of thinking, though, is that Time is suddenly the main character in our story and the primary agent of social change. All the choices our forebears made, to be brave

or cowardly, to be generous or mercenary, to take action or to indulge complacency, don't seem to matter much when progress is inevitable either way. And we still get to feel good about the future.

The reason I'm bringing this up is that I've been struggling lately to understand why people I care about support candidates who have crappy

The idea that positive change will always happen "in time" might be the most self-destructive idea there is.

civil rights records. I haven't understood how someone could look me in the eye and declare her support for Santorum or [fill in your favorite homophobe] because she's worried about her taxes, or socialized GodzillaCare, or whatever. I finally understood last week, when my partner reminded me how perplexed her parents were by the fact that we donated a big chunk of money to defeat Prop 8, cash that we could have eaten for all the good it did. Why do we always have to push so hard, they wondered, when things will get better in time?

They might, but not because of time. Time doesn't care if we spend eternity throwing mud clogs at each other. People, on the other hand, have a big stake in the outcome.

Any cultural progress we've made has been hard won, and most definitely not a steady climb upward. A few people made a choice one way instead of another and we moved forward – or nearly as often, back. Think of the 1896 Supreme Court decision in Plessy vs. Ferguson that kept Jim Crow alive for 60 more years. Or the millions lost in the Holocaust – we'll never know what they would have given the world had they lived. And then there are those chance moments that changed everything: Alexander Fleming was a slob, I'm told, which led to the accidental discovery of Penicillin.

It's the cumulative effect of all of our choices that moves us along. Everything counts. A donation to the losing side, or a momentary decision to turn left, not right.

Last month in Maryland, Republican delegate Wade Kach, an opponent of same-sex marriage, found himself seated next to a number of same-sex couples testifying at a committee hearing: "I saw so much love," he said. "When this hearing was over, I was a changed person in regard to this issue." He voted for progress the next week.



"WHEN THEY WARNED US THAT PRESIDENT SANTORUM WANTED TO TAKE AMERICA BACK TO THE '50's, I REMEMBER THINKING, HECK, THE 1950's WEREN'T SO BAD..."

Couple helps Catholics with gay kids

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

When parents in distress call Linda and Tom Nelson, they often have no place else to turn. If they are in a traditional Catholic church, they may not feel comfortable turning to their congregation members after just learning that their child is gay.

"Think of the classic coming out story, the children know for years and struggle for how to tell parents. But for most parents, when they learn, it's a sudden revelation. So for parents it can be quite traumatic," said Tom Nelson. He and Linda have dedicated their lives to standing up against ignorance in the Catholic Church and helping families deal with the schism between church teaching and same-sex relationships.

The couple met in PFLAG. Both widowed, and both with a gay child, the couple found comfort and love in their activism work. Five years ago they were married and since then their unified voice has been echoing through several faith-based gay advocacy projects and organizations.

They are both board members of Fortunate Families, an international organization that connects Catholic parents of gay children for both support and advocacy. Linda is the President. The Listening Parents Network of Fortunate Families provides the framework to help hundreds of parents each year through email and phone support. They are active in PFLAG and are also part of the Equally Blessed Coalition, which is made up of Fortunate Families, Dignity USA, Call to Action and New Ways Ministry. The Coalition is working to unite Catholics "to have a more obvious voice in response to the negative information from the Catholic hierarchy," Tom said.

On a local level, the Nelsons are working with activists of many faiths to empower LGBT people in all church settings. The LGBT Faith Initiative launched at Affirmations on Jan. 12, and the Nelsons were on the first panel discussion for the group.

They take calls and emails on a daily basis from parents in distress or confusion, seeking an understanding ear.

"Things are getting better," Linda said. "It used to be that there was a lot of anger when children came out to their parents. Now, thanks to the media and more people having conversations it's a little bit easier. People still hurt, but there are fewer people who are shocked. But we still need to help those who hurt."

Tom also handles calls from upset parents. "Most reasonable parents will realize, 'I'm ignorant and I need education.' Their first stop is the website, and they'll get more information from a Catholic perspective. They'll see there are other

Catholic parents that have been through this, and it's okay," he said.

The Listening Parents Network has 143 parents from 101 households in 29 states, provinces in Canada, and one in Nicaragua.

"One of the benefits of the listening parents network is that people are all over the country. We can refer them to a parent who may be able to meet with them for coffee or we can give information through the website," said Tom. "We did have our first conference in 2010. It was a parent conference in Chicago, with about 60 people from across the country. It was pretty good for our first attempt."

He said "positive Catholic voices are not

plight of gay youth until they were faced with it directly."

"For me it was very scary when my son came out," Linda said. "John is my youngest son. When he was 7 or 8 we felt he was a little different. In that day and age you didn't talk about homosexuality. We just swept it under the rug. John came out to me when he was 23. I went into the closet for 2-3 years and when I came out I joined PFLAG. It changed me."

Linda's first husband had passed away before her son came out, leaving her to go through the experience alone, but giving her the opportunity to meet worlds full of new, open-minded people and a support system like nothing she'd experienced before the journey of accepting her son's sexual orientation.

Tom and his family were traumatized because of the contradictions engrained in them by the church. "The Catholic Church has a special problem with homosexuality. Some of it is really offensive," he said. "My son was the kind of kid you had no clue he was gay. He never fit the stereotype I had of gay kids. So he concealed his closet very well. Over the years he'd heard a lot of negative pontificating by his father. And as a result he didn't come out to me. He tried to commit suicide, and was almost successful. It was a hard struggle for us both. But ultimately God gave me a gay son, and I want other parents to know that it is okay. A gay son is a gift from God."

After the suicide attempt, Tom's first wife Trish led the family to PFLAG, where she ultimately became president of the Detroit chapter for three years. After she passed away, Tom felt drawn back to the group, particularly after seeing Trish in a dream. "I really believe that my wife was lining the two of us up. She told me, in my dream, to go back to PFLAG. She said 'It's more important than I thought.' So I went. I ran into Linda and we went to church together. And about a year later Linda and I got married."

While most of their outreach work has been one-on-one support, the Nelsons have seen a rise in the need for political action and advocacy.

"People getting together, like the Faith Initiative, to send a message to church leaders is becoming more and more important," Linda said. "We are getting more contacts from inside churches wanting to know how they can not only help individuals, but how they can change the minds of Catholic leaders."

Find out more about Fortunate Families at www.fortunatamilies.org. The LGBT Faith Initiative seeks to increase acceptance and diversity in many church environments. For more information call 248-398-7105

Week of prayer, healing planned

Saginaw will mark the National Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS with special worship and educational programs beginning Sunday, March 4.

Several faith-based institutions in the community will join thousands of faith communities across the nation in observance of the National Week of Prayer in an effort to bring attention and awareness to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. These institutions also hope to encourage more dialog on HIV/AIDS education, treatment and care through their programming.

"Every faith-based institution in Saginaw has the power and responsibility to change the course of the HIV/AIDS epidemic," say Rev. Charles Coleman from New Faith Temple Church of God In Christ. "Our goal is educate every person about this disease and provide prayer, leadership, compassion and educational information to help families in our congregation as well as people living with HIV/AIDS."

Programs will take place at the following locations:

Kick-off Concert, Time: 4 p.m. March 4, Location: 608 E. Remington, Saginaw

Details: Sponsored by Greater Williams Temple Church of God in Christ, Bishop H.J. Williams. Starring Gospel Lady Vicki Hill, M.C. Open to the public. Gospel Concert with local, national and international artists

"Next Generation of Leaders Youth Group", Time: 4-6 p.m. March 5, Location: 310 S. Washington St., Saginaw

Details: New Birth Missionary Baptist Church, Pastor Larry Camel. Hosting prayer, devotion, information and discussion on HIV prevention. Open to youth and parents.

Evening Prayer and Discussion, Time: 7-8 p.m. March 6, Location: 915 Federal, Saginaw

Details: St. John Lutheran Church, Pastor Paulette Cummings. Evening Prayer and discussions around the church's role in reducing stigma related to HIV/AIDS. Open to all.

My Denomination's Views on HIV/AIDS, Time: 12-2 p.m. March 7, Location: Gamez Community Health Center, 501 Lapeer, Saginaw, MI 48607

Details: Saginaw Community HIV/AIDS Task Force. Supported by Gospel against AIDS. Interfaith forum and discussion is open to all.

In Commemoration, Time: 7-8 p.m. March 8, Location: 2720 Tuscola, Saginaw, Details: St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Pastor Judy Boli host prayer and worship service in commemoration of National Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS, open to all.

Prayer Intention Cards, Time: 7-8 p.m. March 9, Location: 6045 Mackinaw, Kochville Township, Saginaw

Details: Saginaw Community Christian Reformed Church, Pastor Nathan Gritter host a reading of Prayer Intention Cards. Open to all.

National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, Time: 11 a.m.-1 p.m. March 10, Location: Dawn of A New Day Coffeehouse and Café, 210 S. Washington St., Saginaw Details: Sponsored by the Saginaw County HIV/AIDS Task Force. Sharing of poetry expressions regarding HIV/AIDS.

For more information please call the staff of Hearth Home at 989-753-9011.



Tom and Linda Nelson staff table for Fortunate Families at True Colors conference. Photo courtesy of Nelsons.

Heard on Facebook

In an interview with David Gregory, Santorum claimed no proof exists that he wants to impose his own values on other Americans. Have you found any proof?

He cleverly confuses the "right to bring your faith to the public square" (which is hard to object to), with some imagined right to impose someone's beliefs on others through laws.

-Steve Duerksen

You know, it doesn't take a scientist to see he prides himself on his anti-gay views. I mean I'm only 18 and I already know that he dislikes the LGBT community with a passion and wants to do away with contraceptives because its "inhuman."

-Ram Gigantone

Santorum is a joke.
-Michelle Fox-Phillips

You can't expect a sociopath to admit to being caught in his own lies.

-Anthony Boussie

I watched the interview this morning and was pleasantly surprised that David Gregory actually developed a backbone and stood up to Santorum, calling him out on his bullshit. George Stephanopoulos tried also on "This Week", but just didn't seem to have the same strengths when calling out Santorum on his most recent statements.

-Barry Farrington

Comments may be edited for grammar and length.



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S/he Said Democrats: Say I do

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Annise Parker

"I think (the Democratic platform) should (include marriage equality), period, end of sentence," she said. "But it sort of goes to the conversation we just had about President Obama – he needs to evolve faster, he needs to know where his base is. But if he doesn't get there, and if the party platform doesn't get there, I'm a pragmatist and I look at the alternative. Let us not go to the Democratic convention and rip each other up as Democrats because we're not getting to the right result fast enough. Let's try to move people along as far as we can, and then join ranks. Please, Rick Santorum? Newt Gingrich? That's truly scary. Mitt Romney – not a good choice."

—Annise Parker, Democratic mayor of Houston, Texas, in a column titled "Annise Parker, Houston Mayor, On President Obama, Gay Marriage And Being An Out Politician," www.huffingtonpost.com, Feb. 17.



Evan Wolfson

"An overwhelming majority of Democrats support the freedom to marry, as do a significant majority of Independents and voters under 50 across the political spectrum," said Evan Wolfson, founder and president of Freedom to Marry, which is leading the campaign. "The Democratic Party has a noble history of fighting for the human and civil rights of all Americans. It's now time for the national party to be true to its

values and its voters and go unequivocally on record for the freedom to marry."

—Evan Wolfson, founder and president of Freedom to Marry, in a column titled "Freedom To Marry Pushes DNC To Incorporate Marriage Equality Into 2012 Party Platform," www.huffingtonpost.com, Feb. 13. Freedom to Marry, a coalition committed to winning and keeping the freedom to marry for same-gender couples, leads the 'Democratic: Say I Do' campaign.



Neil Abercrombie

"Under current law, a heterosexual couple can choose to enter into a marriage or a civil union. A same-sex couple, however, may only elect a civil union. My obligation as Governor is to support equality under law. This is inequality, and I will not defend it."

—Neil Abercrombie, Democratic governor of Hawaii, in a response to a recent lawsuit challenging the state's ban on same-sex marriage, www.hawaiinewsnow.com, Feb. 22.



Jeanne Shaheen

"I'm proud to join Freedom to Marry's 'Democrats: Say, I Do' campaign. Along with the more than 20,000 Americans who have already signed the online petition, I call on the Democratic Platform Committee to affirm the freedom to marry in our party's national convention platform this September. Any Democratic statement of core beliefs about the importance of families must include

all our families, gay and straight. Our party has a long tradition of leading the charge on important questions of justice. Now is the time for the Democratic Party to stand up for the rights of same-sex couples and their families."

—Jeanne Shaheen, Democratic senator of New Hampshire, in a public announcement declaring her support for the 'Democrats: Say, I do' campaign, www.freedomtomarry.org, Feb. 28.

Parting Glances



Sex with zombies

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Twice recently I observe an attractive young woman interviewing graduating seniors at a nearby Barnes & Noble bookstore. Curious about the company she works for I stop to chat.

She answers with a pleasant, charming mid-twenties smile. Paying her a compliment I say, "You're a dead ringer for Kim Novak." "Who's she?" she says sweetly. Innocently. Not a clue.

Startled by her answer I mention "Vertigo," and let it go at that, wondering just how many movie stars of my own past are unknown to today's youngsters?

Conversely, it occurs to me over coffee as I read the FreeP horoscope, entertainment happenings, birthdays of the day, I know little or nothing about the personalities listed as year-older celebrants. Makensie Vega, who? Don Omar, duh. Ashton Kutcher. (Well, that's another story.)

Racked at hand are magazines: People, In Touch, OK!, US, Pop Star! Ah, dear me, yes! Divorce, scandal, drug addiction, abortion, suicide, bad TV ratings. It sells. The rich and famous live in glass houses. Windows occasionally soaped, graffiti sprayed, peed on, for a buck-fifty a look see.

I, too, enjoy a quickie share of "whisper whisper" -- especially the kind about holier-than-thou types who get caught with their panic down in public watering holes. But of late I've come to draw the line on what I find is an egregious intrusion of celebrity privacy.

There's something journalistically hitting below the garter belt to running tabloid pictures, say of near-senile Zsa Zsa Gabor wheelchair bound, fragile Elizabeth Taylor looking like a ninety-something hellion, or Rip Torn, the once Sweet Bird of Youth, obese and bloated.

God knows we all have our gravity-compromised moments. Especially as we get older and older. But deliberately tarnishing the icons of silver screen beauty, talent, wit, grace. Is nothing sacred? (Rev. Billy Graham hasn't aged too well, by the way.)

Then, too, there's what I call having carnal knowledge with zombies. Digging up the sex life of those deceased, outing them, telling all. Usually in gleeful, shocking detail. Forget the admonition, speak no ill of the dead. Now it's uncover the long-buried, wormy dirt. . .

. . . Katherine Hepburn with 150 female partners. Tyrone Power into non-Olympic aqua sports. Charles Laughton concocting lacto-vegetarian sandwiches. (Well, let's not go there.) . . .

I suppose it all starts with Kenneth Anger's "Hollywood Babylon," a 1965 snoop's compendium, with grainy photos of sex, mayhem, misfortune. Albert Dekker -- who's he, anyhow? -- hanging himself in drag, asphyxiation for kinks gone amiss (no pun intended). Groucho Marx, head to toe with tats . . .

Latest entry for snooping about for gossip in Hollywood Forever Cemetery is "Full Service," a tell-all exposé by 88-year-old, former bartender Scotty Bowers, who "coordinated" sex for the rich and famous for over 50 years. (Grove Press, \$25)

If you believe Scotty, he pimped everybody, screwed all. Cary Grant. Randolph Scott. Spencer Tracy. Walter Pidgeon. Truman Capote, Tennessee Williams, Vivien Leigh. Dezi Arnez. Cole Porter. (Golden Shower Ty. Gourmet sandwich Laughton.)

As for Hepburn's 150 miffs, Bowers down plays it, "Why not? It's over a period of 49 years." Sure Scotty. Who's to contradict you? Fun for your profit. Sex with the living dead.

Charles@pridesource.com (Yes! I'm still available.)




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Ozone House benefit features home-grown talent

YPSILANTI – Local performers are set to take the stage for the Community Showcase benefit concert for Ozone House on Saturday, March 10 at St. Luke's Episcopal Church. The showcase line-up will highlight a diverse range of talent including MC Kadence and Magestik Legend, plus many more local favorites. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the suggested donation is \$10.

All proceeds will benefit the Ozone House and its programs for at-risk youth. Aside from providing hot meals, laundry facilities, computers and creative programming for young people, the Ozone location has a staff of dedicated social workers who offer services free of charge to help youth with housing, employment, education and connecting with community resources.

Ypsilanti resident Terese Theophilus came up with the idea for the Community Showcase benefit concert in response to learning of funding cuts. "My first reaction was the Ozone House is providing a service that no one in Washtenaw County is providing. I believe that the Ozone House is a vital voice for young people in the community," said Theophilus.

Ozone Youth Employment Coordinator, Jesse Morgan, said he hopes the community comes out in force so that Ozone House can do even more to benefit the lives of young people.

St. Luke's Episcopal Church is located at 120 N. Huron St., Ypsilanti.

Follow election news coverage online this week.

We also have coverage of web spy cam trial out of New Jersey.

Time to plan for Pride 2012 events

BY CRYSTAL A. PROXMIRE

Pride planning is now under way around Southeastern Michigan as Hotter Than July and Ferndale Pride both held their first organizational meetings Feb. 23. Both groups had higher than expected turnout and anticipate growing the events this year. HTJ will hold its 17th annual event in Palmer Park beginning Tuesday, July 24 through Sunday, July 29. Ferndale Pride, now in its second year, will take place over Father's Day weekend beginning Saturday, June 16 through Sunday, June 17. Neither event conflicts with Motor City Pride, which returns to Hart Plaza in Detroit the weekend of June 2 and June 3.

Ferndale Pride popped up last year after Motor City Pride was moved from a small stretch of Nine Mile in Downtown Ferndale, to the large gathering space of Hart Plaza. Diversity-minded residents and businesses wanted a way to continue showing their support for the gay community, and they held some quickly-planned events.

"We have always meant this to be a way to show that Ferndale is welcome and supportive of the gay community."

- Craig Covey

This year the emphasis is on planning and there are some interesting things in the works. The Color Run, an event spearheaded by volunteers Brian Lane and Jay McMillan, is a non-competitive 5k run where every thousand meters the runners are splashed with a corn-starch based paint in a different color of the rainbow.

The SE Michigan Dyke March will be returning as part of the celebration, with a march through Downtown Ferndale on June 16.

There will also be a traditional Pride festival on Sunday, June 17 where community groups and vendors can have tables, and there will be music and entertainment. Other ideas are being explored, including events to be held inside Affirmations Community Center or possibly family-themed ideas for Fathers' Day.

"We have always meant this to be a way to show that Ferndale is welcome and supportive of the gay community, and we hope more folks will come out and share their ideas and get involved in the planning or by volunteering," said Craig Covey, one of the event organizers. "It's all springing up organically from people that live here and want to do different things. The Dyke March was started by a group of young people, and now we have this Color Run. It's going to be really fun and I hope we get more ideas as this gets closer."

To get involved with Ferndale Pride Plan-



Volunteers started planning Ferndale Pride Feb. 23. The event will be held on June 16 -17 and will not conflict with Motor City Pride which is planned for Hart Plaza in Detroit on June 2 - 3. BTL Photo: Crystal Proxmire.



This year KICK will partner with Black Pride Society to put on a six-day festival July 24 - July 29. Pictured above are John Trimble, Bré Campbell, Walter Houston, Stacey Hale, Philasean Benjamin and Curtis Lipscomb.

ning, contact ferndalepride2011@gmail.com and check out the website at www.ferndalepride.com.

To learn more about Motor City Pride visit motorcitypride.org. Organizers are currently looking for volunteers, performers and sponsors for the event.

Hotter Than July

HTJ is building off sixteen years of experience in Pride planning. This year the Black Pride Society has partnered with KICK, the agency for African Americans to put on the six-day festival. KICK founder Curtis Lipscomb and Black Pride Society President Kimberly Jones are project managers for the event, and a record-sized committee of fifteen people has been established.

HTJ runs July 24 through July 29. Core events include a Candlelight Vigil, Kickin' on the River boat ride, a movie night, the 13th Annual Palmer Park Pride Picnic, and the Sunday brunch. The 17th Annual Gathering on LGBT Issues is also a key element of HTJ. This is a day of edu-

cation and advocacy workshops with emphasis on community building and community action.

Each of these events has subcommittees, and community volunteers and involvement is being sought. They are also seeking sponsors and contributions to continue keeping most HTJ events free of charge.

Lipscomb is excited about KICK's role in the planning. "The big change over the years with Hotter than July has been with leadership. What's great now is that we understand the movement has to be strategic about shared resources. The more the mission is similar the more we can combine resources. What is great that KICK is it's in the position to bring more leadership to the event and we have an office where we can bring people together to work on these things."

The next planning committee meeting for HTJ is Thursday, March 29, 6 p.m. at the KICK office, 41 Burroughs Street, Ste 109 in Detroit. Those interested in getting involved or donating can contact Lipscomb at 313-285-9733. The Hotter Than July website is <http://sites.google.com/site/detroitshotterthanjuly>.

Gay sheriff prompts intriguing questions for locals, country

BY PAULINE ARRILLAGA

PREScott VALLEY, Ariz. (AP)

- A few days ago, the Yavapai Tea Party gathered at a church in rural Arizona to discuss the all-too-familiar topic of illegal immigration. Among the conservative, mostly over-55 crowd, it is a subject seen in black and white. Build a fence, add agents, reject amnesty - period.

And so it was all the more striking when, off to the side in a room with "Jesus Loves Us!!" written on a chalkboard, the conversation turned to the subject on everyone's mind, if not the agenda: The conservative Arizona sheriff and Republican candidate for Congress who less than a week earlier had admitted to reporters, his constituents - indeed to the world - that he is gay.

The absolutes were, in large part, absent.

Consider the comments of Bill Halpin, a 64-year-old ex-Air Force pilot who serves on the local tea party board: "I care less. I just care less. Don't preach it on me. Don't push it on me and, by golly, I respect your rights." And this from Mona Patton, the 60-year-old real estate agent who is the group's president: "I'm a Christian, but who am I to make a judgment about somebody else? I don't have that right, and I look beyond that. ... I still believe in him. I still back him. I still like him. That doesn't affect that."

Sheriff Paul Babeu's "coming out" moment on Feb. 18 was surreal enough, given the man, his politics and the venue - a news conference in front of the Pinal County Sheriff's Department with Babeu, in uniform, surrounded by deputies. Then, of course, there was the startling reason for the sudden admission: a story in an alternative weekly publication in which a former lover accused Babeu of threatening his immigration status if he revealed their relationship.

Now the conversations that have ensued here since - in one of the most politically conservative states in all the union - are astonishing in their own right. There are questions, many of them, about Babeu and his "choices" and judgment, about whether the sheriff may have somehow abused his power. Yet voters, Republican voters in particular, are also asking some intriguing questions of themselves, about acceptance and identity and values, about what really matters most to them.

"This may be a litmus test," said Patton, not just of whether a gay man can survive running for Congress in a deeply



The conservative Arizona sheriff and Republican candidate for Congress Paul Babeu's "coming out" moment on Feb. 18 at a press conference where he said he was gay. AP Photo.

conservative district in a red state but, more so, of the contrast between how far society has come - and still has to go. "I have many, many, many friends in my life that are gay and have been gay, and I don't have issues with it. But, you know, it's a hurdle for a lot of people, and it's, I think, a shame. ... I think he's going to have a hard row to hoe."

Before all of this, the 43-year-old was considered a rising star in Republican politics. A retired major in the Army National Guard and an ex-police officer, Babeu was the first Republican elected sheriff in Pinal County, nestled between Phoenix and Tucson in a culturally diverse part of Arizona. Having previously commanded a National Guard unit in the border town of Yuma, Babeu quickly became known for his tough stance on illegal immigration. He appeared alongside Sen. John McCain in a 2010 ad in which McCain advocated completion of a border fence, and last year was chosen as America's "Sheriff of the Year" by his colleagues in the National Sheriffs' Association.

In January, he announced his candidacy for Arizona's newly drawn 4th Congressional District, and polls soon showed him as the favorite against an incumbent tea party Republican who switched districts to run and a GOP state senator who once sponsored legislation to define marriage as being between one man and one woman.

Then came the Feb. 17 headline on the website of the Phoenix New Times: "Paul Babeu's Mexican Ex-Lover Says Sheriff's Attorney Threatened Him With Deportation."

A day later, Babeu found himself before microphones and reporters, denying

the threats but acknowledging, with stark candor, that he is gay.

"I'm here to say that all these allegations ... are absolutely completely false except for the issues that refer to me as being gay. Because that's the truth."

Some Arizona political insiders were quick to declare Babeu's congressional aspirations - indeed, his political career - over, in large part because of questions that go beyond his sexual orientation. An independent investigation, begun at Babeu's behest, is looking into the allegations of intimidation and threatening behavior. Babeu has denied threatening his ex-boyfriend with deportation and said his understanding is that the man, originally from Mexico, is in the country legally. The former boyfriend also told CNN that he was here legally.

Still others have questioned Babeu's judgment because of a photograph the New Times published showing him shirtless and standing in his underpants. Babeu had sent the picture to his former boyfriend, and his campaign manager and attorney, Chris DeRose, said Babeu "realizes that was a mistake, and he shouldn't have done that." The New Times also published an old profile of Babeu's from a gay dating website showing another shirtless photograph, with Babeu's face mostly cut out.

Then, on Friday, The Arizona Republic reported that the U.S. Office of Special Counsel is investigating whether one or more of Babeu's employees at the sheriff's office engaged in on-the-job politicking.

As a columnist for that newspaper wrote earlier in the week: "Sheriff Babeu is

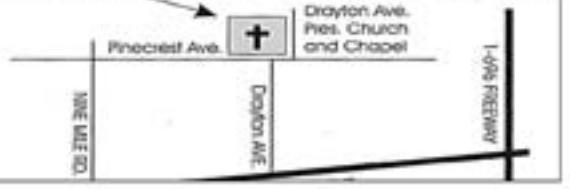


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Creep of the Week

Rick Santorum

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

America loves a circus. Doesn't even matter if it's ethical. Tigers locked in cages all day? Elephants viciously whipped? We don't care. We want to see big cats jump through hoops of fire and the world's largest mammal stand on her hind legs before taking a bow. All while we shove cotton candy and funnel cakes into our face.



Rick Santorum

This mindset is, as far as I can tell, the reason why Rick Santorum is a viable contender this far into the Republican scramble for the party's nomination for president. He's a spectacle and the American public doesn't see something like this everyday. Can it be that voters have become so used to the traditional prattle of politicians that Santorum's propensity to say exactly what he means is actually a welcome change? Even if the things he says are elephant shit crazy?

This is a man who said on CNN that women who get pregnant as the result of being raped should just "make the best of a bad situation" and "accept what God has given to you."

This is a man who has said, "I'm not a believer in birth control" and "I don't think it works. I think it's harmful to women. I think it's harmful to our society."

This is a man who has equated marriage equality with man-on-dog sex.

This is a man who said, into a microphone in front of lots of people, that the Crusades were actually a good thing.

This is a man who said, about welfare, "I don't want to make black people's lives better by giving them somebody else's money."

This is a man who said, into a microphone in front of lots of people, that the Crusades were actually a good thing

This is a man who wants to see all states follow the same anti-gay marriage law. As for same-sex couples who are already legally married? "Well their marriage would be invalid," he said. "If the constitution says 'marriage is this,' then people whose marriages are not consistent with the constitution..." And then he shrugged.

This is a man who said the separation of church and state "makes me want to throw up."

Granted, you may look at all of these positions and come to the conclusion that this is a man obsessed with social issues who wants to impose his own ideological will on America should he become president. But you would be so wrong. That's totally a lie perpetuated by the lame-stream media, Santorum told NBC's David Gregory recently.

"Yeah, they are deeply held views, but they're not what I dominantly talk about, David," Santorum responded. "You're taking things that over a course of a 20-year career, and pulling out quotes from different speeches on issues that are fairly tangential, not what people care about mostly in America, and saying, 'Oh, he wants to impose those values.' Look at my record. I never wanted to impose any of the things that you just talked about."

Then, just in case anyone missed the point, he added, "There is no evidence at all that I want to impose those values on anybody else."

It kind of makes you wonder just how Santorum is defining "no evidence" here. Perhaps he's being misquoted and the "no" is actually "no." short for "number," and in this case a very large number of so much undeniable evidence.

Or maybe he misspoke and meant to say, "There is not no evidence at all." It's hard to say. Words are a tricky balancing act. And he's working without a net.

I'd make a "Send in the Clowns" reference now, but that would be an insult to Judy Collins.

► Sheriff

Continued from p. 11

not in political (or perhaps legal) trouble because his lifestyle has been exposed. He's in trouble because he was involved in a messy relationship that spilled over into his public life and has raised questions about his judgment. And when you're running for the U.S. Congress your judgment is an issue. ... It isn't a gay thing. It's a trust thing."

Whatever the "thing" is, the reaction to it has - thus far - not been quite what some may have expected.

When Babeu posted a link to his news conference on his Facebook page and implored voters to "stand with me as we talk about the issues that matter," more than 1,000 comments flooded in. While some expressed disappointment and said that the sheriff had lost their support or branded him a hypocrite for being gay and Republican, the vast majority supported Babeu - from locals who know him to out-of-staters declaring that they, too, are conservative and gay.

"First gay man I can agree with," read one post. "We conservatives have his back," said another. And: "We still support you Sheriff. Gay or straight. Let's get this country back on the right track."

DeRose said Friday that Babeu had received \$17,000 in political donations since his news conference, and that his supporters in Arizona "are more enthusiastic than ever."

Whether this is all just political posturing or even, political correctness that may soon fade remains to be seen. Babeu, who declined an interview request, has vowed to stay in the congressional race, and the primary is still six months off. He continues to make campaign appearances, including a speech at a Lincoln Day dinner the same day he admitted being gay.

"So, how is YOUR weekend going?" he joked, and his audience laughed.

The event was held in Yavapai County in the heart of the congressional district, which covers a huge swath stretching from the border near Yuma through the horse pastures of Prescott Valley up north to the conservative stronghold of Mohave County near the Nevada border. Phoenix political consultant Chuck Coughlin described the district as one of the most right-leaning in the state - with a rural, older demographic that does not "lend one to believe that there is a high degree of likelihood" of Babeu winning the congressional seat or even staying in the race for the long haul.

There have been no openly gay Republicans in Congress since 2006, when another Arizonan - U.S. Rep. Jim Kolbe - retired. And the nation's 7,382 state legislators include 93 openly gay

Democrats but not a single openly gay Republican, according to the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund.

"If you're an openly gay Republican, you face a platform that is sometimes not welcoming," said Chuck Wolfe, the fund's president. "It's going to take a while to reverse that feeling."

Kolbe, who represented a more diverse, swing district than the one that Babeu hopes to win, was elected to Congress in 1985 and disclosed in 1996 that he was gay. Last week, he endorsed Babeu, and he said in an interview that while no one could predict whether Babeu will emerge from this and still be able to succeed politically, "we have come a long way."

"I think in a few years the media won't be paying that much attention to this issue. The public clearly is ahead of the media on this, and as the polls show people don't seem to be that concerned about this kind of an issue," he said. "The issue is whether Paul's a good candidate for Congress or not, and I think he is."

Coughlin and others noted that Babeu has a few things working in his favor: He's charismatic. Arizonans like his stance on illegal immigration and other conservative issues, but they also genuinely like him. Several voters also said that the sheriff's sexual orientation was one of the worst-kept secrets in Arizona political circles and that while they wish it hadn't come out the way it did, the fact itself was hardly surprising.

"Everybody knew on some level, and we never gave it a second thought," said Republican Shawna Thornton, 38, a before-and-after Babeu supporter who lives in Lake Havasu City, within the 4th District, and believes that the now openly gay sheriff still has a chance.

Old assumptions of how party affiliation defines a voter's position on social issues such as homosexuality no longer ring true, insisted Thornton, noting that for her and many others "conservatism" isn't about abortion or gay marriage but rather limited government, fiscal responsibility and "values" in the sense of understanding right from wrong.

"I'm finding that people are more middle of the road, less extreme, more accepting of how different people are deep down inside," she said.

Added Coughlin: "Life's a mosaic of issues and people, and although we want to see the world in black and white there's very little of that around. It's a lot of grays, and a lot of colors in between."

Some voters contacted for this story were hesitant to discuss the situation as they await the outcome of the independent probe. But the ones who did appear to be genuinely muddling through all that had happened - and their own feelings about it - in ways that shunned the extremes.

"Well ... I just think that ... You

know, I don't know," said Barry Denton, 52, a horse trainer and president of the Yavapai Republican Men's Forum, whose group played host to Babeu for a speech only days before all the "news" of his private life broke. As always, Denton said, he was well received.

"I think he's done an extremely good job as sheriff, and I think he's done a great thing by making people more aware of the immigration problem. I guess I wish he had come out with the gay thing sooner. I think he should have been a little more upfront, 'cause he's a pretty upfront guy."

"I don't agree with his lifestyle. That's his business," he said. "But as far as what he's accomplished, it's been impressive. ... I'm just disappointed."

Denton said he thinks the allegations against Babeu will prove unfounded, and that he hadn't yet picked a candidate to back. When asked whether all of this might persuade him to choose someone other than Babeu, he said: "I haven't come to any conclusion there yet."

There were similarly mixed feelings at the tea party meeting on illegal immigration, at which Babeu was initially scheduled to speak. Tea party representatives and Babeu's campaign manager said the sheriff had to cancel because of another previously scheduled event.

Jeff Tomb, a businessman who is running for county supervisor in the area, was frank in allowing that he didn't think, in his district, that "the homosexual thing is going to go over real well." But only moments later he questioned his own conclusion: "I don't know. People are getting more and more accepting now. He came out and said it and he was honest about it, which is a big plus. That's a good sign of a good honest man, and we need an honest man."

Halpin and Patton, the tea party board member and president, were among those who said they didn't care whether Babeu is gay. As for whether that meant they could vote for him, Halpin said he wouldn't rule it out, should Babeu remain in the race. (He is, however, adamantly opposed to the Babeu opponent who switched districts.) Patton went further, saying she probably would support the sheriff. But then she admitted that, in reality, she doubted he would remain in the race - or that he could win if he does.

"You know, we put people in boxes and we expect them to behave a certain way and then when people are outside the lines ... there's punitive measures that happen," she said. "I don't know. I just hope people are bigger than that, and I don't know that they're going to be. I don't know what to tell you. This is such a difficult situation. I wish it had not come down the way it did. I wish it hadn't happened."

"But," she said, "here we are."

Latest marriage polls

56 pct in Iowa Poll opposed same-sex marriage ban

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) - A recent poll suggests a majority of Iowans oppose a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage in Iowa.

The Des Moines Register's Iowa Poll says 56 percent of those polled earlier this month were against the proposed amendment. The poll says 38 percent favored the idea, while 6 percent weren't sure.

A year ago, 40 percent of those surveyed supported an amendment, while 54 percent were opposed.

The poll of 800 Iowans, conducted from Feb. 12 to 15, has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

The state Supreme Court unanimously ruled same-sex marriage legal in April 2009. In November 2010, voters ousted three of the justices who were on the ballot for retention.

The proposed constitutional amendment has been blocked in the Iowa Senate.

Changes seen in Maine on gay marriage since vote

PORTRLAND, Maine (AP) - Gay marriage advocates say much has changed since 2009 when Mainers overturned a law legalizing same-sex marriage. Opponents agree.

But they disagree on what those changes are and what they mean for this year's gay marriage initiative, expected as a statewide referendum on November's ballot.

Gay marriage activists say many opponents in the 2009 referendum have changed their minds. They base that view on poll numbers, one-on-one discussions with 40,000 residents and strong response they had in collecting more than 100,000 signatures to move the matter forward.

But opponents say what's changed is that Mainers are more conservative now - as evidenced by the Republican-controlled Legislature and Republican governor - and are more vocal in their opposition since voters rejected same-sex marriage three years ago.

► Herman Miller

Continued from p. 13

and history of recognizing the value in employee uniqueness. He shared a clip from a 1986 interview with founder DJ DePree. In it, DePree tells the story of how a worker on the line had died of a heart attack. When he visited the family home, he learned more about the man than he had expected. He said that from that day on he had respect for each employee as an individual.

"DJ DePree had a traditional view of 'labor' and didn't really appreciate employees as people until this profound experience, which caused him to rethink his entire management philosophy," said Schurman.

"Inclusiveness and diversity was an important element in this, though that might not have been the terminology of DJ's day. It is evidenced by the people that he surrounded himself with and greatly influenced him thereafter. Although DJ was a devout Baptist, and West Michigan far from diverse in those days, by the 1940s his lead sales executive was Jewish. And among his closest friends and the company's director of design was George Nelson, a publicly avowed atheist.

"Yet DJ and these men, and others like them, had a very warm and close relationship and the greatest respect for one another. They may not have always seen eye to eye on everything, but DJ understood that it didn't preclude close friendship and professional collaboration. That sensibility came to define the Herman Miller culture, as a community of people with shared purpose and values, though we all also have unique life experiences and aspects as individuals."

Westra is now comfortable at work, and

remains active in the Inclusiveness Resource Team so that employees know they are not only protected, but welcome. He and his partner enjoy quality health benefits and they are "fortunate that Herman Miller is ahead of the curve."

He adds that work must always be done to affirm feeling welcome.

"Not everyone is out at work, and people don't need to be. There are lots of reasons people choose not to come out at work no matter how welcoming we are. This is Holland and Zeeland, small towns where you might be working on the same line as your parent's next door neighbor and you may feel okay to be out in some places, like work, but aren't yet ready to be out to your parents. It's okay. At least they know that their job is safe whenever they are ready."

The freedom and respect have kept Westra active and engaged in his work community. "As I look back, I remember having those first discussions about the affinity groups, talking about how things were changing, but that we'd never see partner benefits in my lifetime. Never. But here, at least here at Herman Miller, we have done it."

Online:

Find out more about Herman Miller's inclusive business practices at www.hermanmiller.com/content/hermanmiller/english/about-us/our-values-in-action/inclusiveness-and-diversity.html.

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Horsing around

Out frontwoman for indie duo talks career path, grammar-inspired band name

BY ANDREA POTEET

For writers, debates over grammar can lead to strained friendships, bruised egos or endless bragging rights.

For Kate Cooper, feisty frontwoman for Aussie indie duo An Horse, an argument with her sister led to her curious band name.

"My sister and I had a grammatical joke," says Cooper, who will perform with the band March 9 at Pontiac's Pike Room. "She would argue that 'an horse' was correct. Eventually she made a sweater with the name on it and I'd wear it around town and people would say 'Is that a band?' and I'd say 'no.'"

After playing several solo shows under the name, Cooper, who had formally played with trio Iron On, teamed up with colleague Damon Cox to form the band, which practiced after hours in Skinny's, the Brisbane punk record store where they both worked.

"We talked about it for about a year that we should start a band," Cooper says. "Then one day we actually snuck around at work and set up some equipment and played. It just kind of felt good, so we kept doing it."

The after-work hobby soon became a full-fledged band, pairing Cooper's melodic murmurs with Damon's drum beats for two albums, 2009's "Rearrange Beds" and last year's "Walls." It's also led to tours with Tegan & Sara, Death Cab for Cutie and Silversun Pickups.

"It feels good," says Cooper of her rise from stocking records to recording them, "but sometimes I'd rather be working at a record store."

Cooper said she was first drawn to performing during a rare childhood outing with her father, who instilled in her a deep love of rock music.

"I went to a very strict private girls' school and my parents were very strict about me going to school, and I never had a day off," Cooper says.

"So, one day, my dad said I could have a half day and he'd pick me up and he took me and my sister to my first concert ever, which was the Rolling Stones. That kind of blew my mind, and I remember watching it and going, 'That's what I want to do.'"

Though the concert solidified her love of music, she attempted several career paths, including a stint at law school, before branching out to perform her own music. If it weren't for the impromptu jam that led to An Horse, she might have never known what she wanted to do professionally.

"I still think I will know when I grow up," says Cooper, 32. "I don't understand how people know that at 18, and I don't understand how people know that at 30."

Their sophomore effort was a departure for the pair, who recorded their first record in the Australian bush, and features Cooper's sweetly detached voice and confessional lyrics penned during her recent move to Montreal. Cooper was

getting used to the bitter cold in a city where she barely knew anyone and her girlfriend worked long hours, so she stayed home and wrote the majority of "Walls" songs. Its most heartfelt lyrics are present on "Brain on a Table," written about being on tour while her mother was ill back home. "I'm not scared of all that much," she croons in a barely audible whisper. "Just please wake up."

Though listening to her lyrics seems at times like accidentally stumbling onto a friend's diary, Cooper said the album is not as personal as it may seem.

"It's not that I intentionally try to make it personal," she says. "I just write the way I write and I guess it comes out that way. A lot of people assume they know what I'm talking about, and a lot of times they are way off the mark. But that's cool; I'll let them think what they want. They can come up with their own meanings and then everyone's happy."

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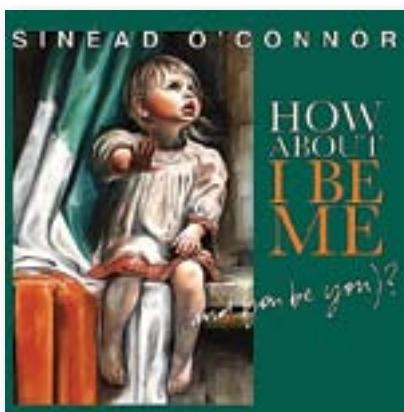
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Hear Me Out

Sinead O'Connor's first album in five years. Plus: Amy Ray's lost 'Love'



BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Sinead O'Connor, 'How About I Be Me (And You Be You)?'

Does nothing compare to Sinead O'Connor? On her ninth album, and first since the Irish self-proclaimed "quarter-gay" released "Theology" in 2007, that could very well be true, and for many reasons. That sterling voice, in full glorious effect on "How About I Be Me," has been overshadowed with headline-hogging antics: a suicide attempt, marital trouble and Twitter outbursts. Her latest album – released 25 years after her debut – reaffirms her as a gifted singer with breathtaking abilities, refreshing frankness and a big set of balls. "Queen of Denmark," swinging from schizophrenic highs and lows, is so self-deprecating and hilariously fuming with bitter rage that, even though it's a cover of a John Grant song, it mingles seamlessly within a set that confounds with the quirkiness of O'Connor's own narratives: child abandonment darkens the disturbing "I Had a Baby"; "4th and Vine," the album-launching hoedown, joyously recalls her wedding day; "Old Lady," building into a classic rocker, has her holding out for someone who will "make me laugh like an idiot, not be so serious." But when she's cold sober, there's no denying she's at her most powerful. She sings junkie confessional "Reason With Me" like she's exhausted every other option, her voice weary and breathless. "Back Where You Belong" is even more heartbreakingly beautiful. So fine. Be you, Sinead. We wouldn't want it any other way. Grade: B+



Yuksek, 'Living on the Edge of Time'

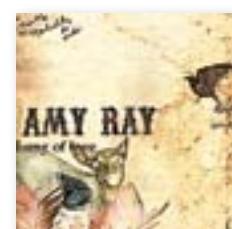
Pierre-Alexandre Busson, better known under the Yuksek moniker, could only repress his pop-boy for so long. Take leadoff single "On a Train," a wonderful acid trip of echoing, new-wave escapism. It's far off from the classically-trained Frenchman's first album, still the club-kid kind but rougher around the edges and certainly not as mainstream-tailored. And hey, he's better for it. "White Keys" taps into a stayed whimsicality that he first introduced on that disc, but layers it in distorted synths and handclaps, and as it reaches a pretty amazing break it ripples through you like the best '80s Euro-disco. On the flip side, there's "Dead or Alive," a bare bass-driven gem that gels from indie to pop-rock anthem. "Always on the Run" and "Fireworks" work out his piano chops, both percolating under a cool whomp-whomp beat; he goes indie-acoustic on "Off the Wall," before blasting into a psychedelic dance party; and the cascading shimmer of "To See You Smile" is trance-inducing. Same goes for "You Should Talk," a surging throwback with an irresistible outer-space sound that conjures up one of the dreamiest melodies. There's no escaping it. Yuksek's myriad of funk, old-school dance and a hankering for the cool-kid trends of today yield surprisingly good results, making "Living on the Edge of Time" not only fun to listen to but completely accessible to the music snobs who will try – and fail – to resist it. Grade: B



Also Out

The Magnetic Fields, 'Love at the Bottom of the Sea'

Frontman Stephin Merritt's weirdly awesome love letter to a queen, prog-pop song "Andrew in Drag," was gonna be hard to top: It's a breezy earworm that's smart, cheeky and about a straight guy's romantic infatuation with a cross-dresser. If slight at times – with 15 tracks that clock in at just over 30 minutes, there's little substance – the 10th disc from the longtime indie-popeteers aren't taking themselves too seriously with songs that sarcastically take on pre-marital babymaking ("God Wants Us to Wait") and hiring a hitman to blow off "Your Girlfriend's Face." But they pull their tongues out of their cheeks for a few ditties: "I'd Go Anywhere with Hugh" is a cute slice of '60s sunshine, and that sweetness moves through "The Only Boy in Town," too. One word: magnetic.



Amy Ray, 'Lung of Love'

Off she goes again, building on the folk elements she and Emily Saliers continue to explore as the Indigo Girls. Ray's sixth studio album in a decade makes the gruff-voiced tomboy uniquely profound, but the album falls short of her usual genius. And that's not only because tracks like "Glow" go for the easy sing-along hook. "Lung of Love" is one of her most unbalanced works, launching with the dragging mid-tempo "When You're Gone, You're Gone," and then going for an odd change of pace that's completely out of place on bluegrass throwdown "The Rock is My Foundation." She's still got it on soft-rocker "I Didn't," the only real standout on "Lung of Love." The rest mostly just reveals that Ray should catch her breath before the next release.

Chris Azzopardi is the editor of Q Syndicate, the international LGBT wire service. Reach him via his website at www.chris-azzopardi.com.

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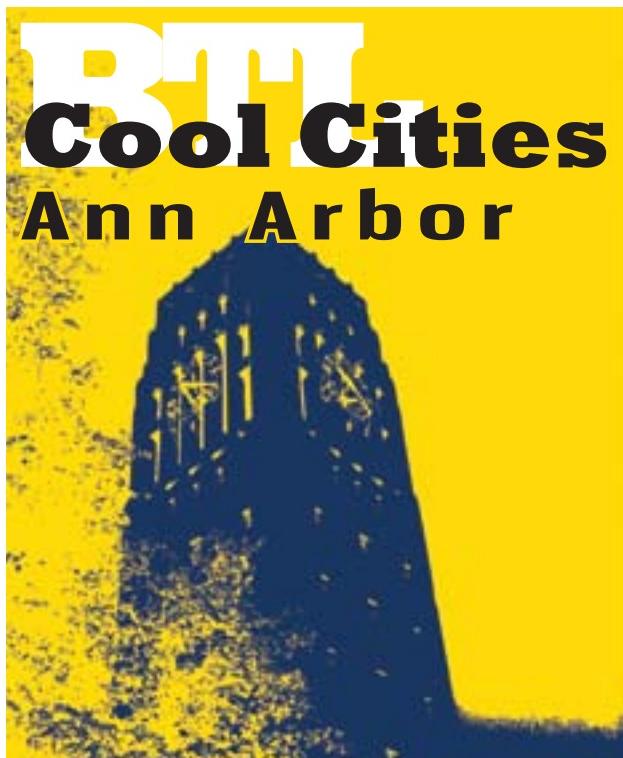
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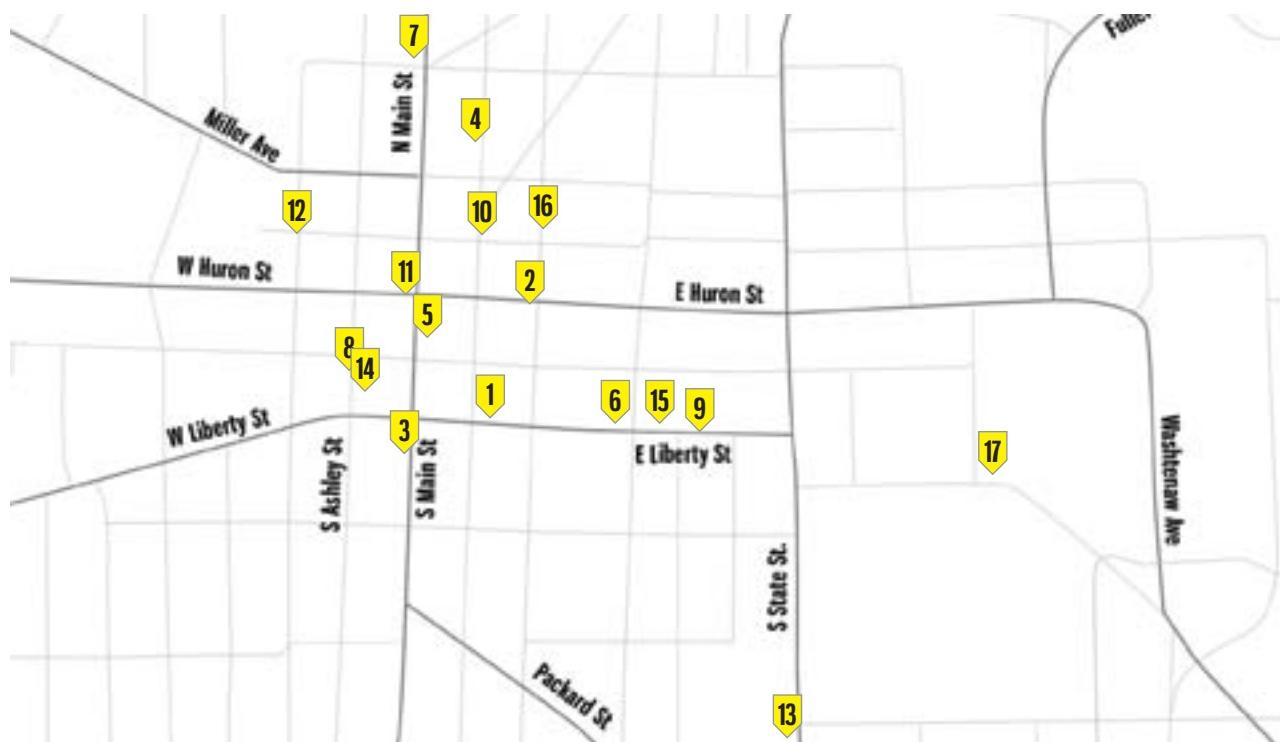
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Catie Curtis performs new album at The Ark

The songwriting of Catie Curtis, who performs 8 p.m. March 2 at The Ark, combines insightful lyrics with addictive melodies and high energy. Catie's recordings and impressive touring career in the U.S. and Europe have earned her rave reviews and wide recognition.

Her songs have been featured on "Dawson's Creek," "Felicity," "Alias," "Chicago Hope" and "Grey's Anatomy," as well as in several independent films. She's toured extensively with Mary Chapin Carpenter and with the original Lilith Fair. Catie was named grand prize winner

of the International Songwriting Competition for her song "People Look Around," co-written with Mark Erelli.

In January 2009 she performed at the Human Rights Campaign's official Obama inaugural ball, and she's been back to the White House several times. Catie's new album, "Stretch Limousine on Fire," delivers some of the finest material of her career: 10 original songs that push at her own musical boundaries

See Ann Arbor, page 20

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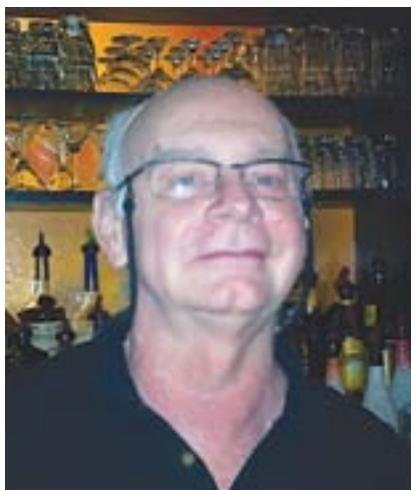
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► Ann Arbor

Continued from p. 19

and explore harsh realities that are tempered with moments of fleeting beauty. This temporary nature of life is a theme that pervades the album from the first notes. The opening song, "Let It Last," which features folk powerhouse and former tour mate Mary Chapin Carpenter singing harmony, finds Curtis pleading "I know it can't last / And all I ask is let it last a little longer." Tickets are \$20. For more information, visit www.theark.org.

'It Gets Better' book contributor speaks

Former social worker and middle school English teacher, Randy Roberts Potts (pictured, left) is a freelance writer who wrote about his coming out experience as the grandson of televangelist Oral Roberts in the recent "It Gets Better" book. He is also the man behind the "The Gay Agenda" project, a performance-art piece touring the Bible Belt in 2012. Randy will speak about being gay and Christian at 5 p.m. March 10 at First United Methodist Church of Ann Arbor on 120 S. State St. For more information, visit www.fumc-a2.org.

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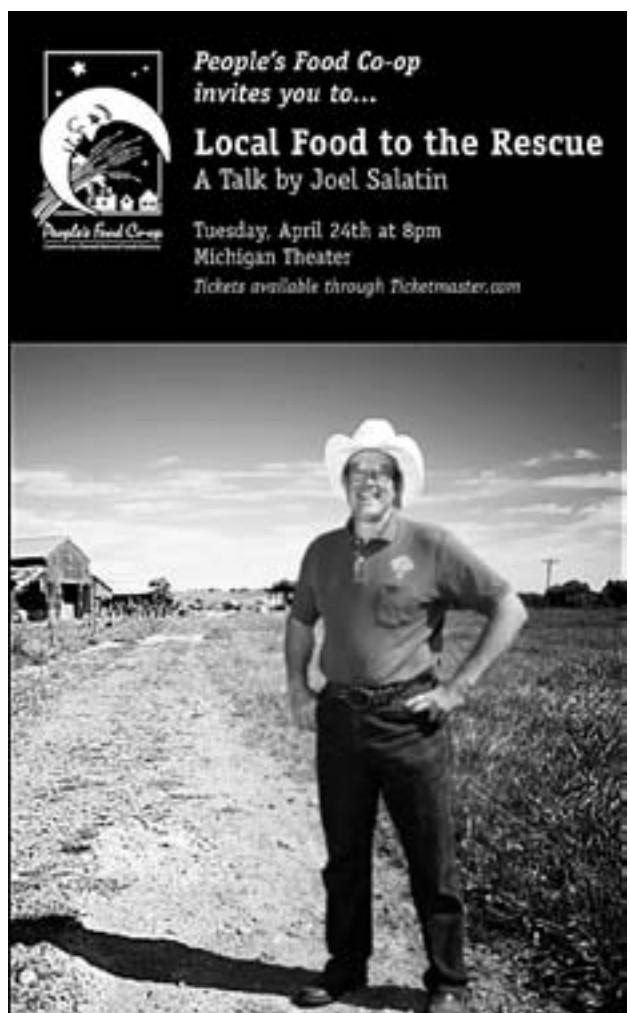
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Mosaic celebrates 20 years Pop music show marks anniversary

BY KATE OPALEWSKI

Drawn by the excitement of art and the quality of performance, around 200 young people from more than 50 metropolitan schools come together each year to be a part of the Mosaic Youth Theater of Detroit.

For their 20th Celebration Season, the multicultural youth ensemble presents Singsation! The Mosaic Singers in Concert from Mar. 2-4 at the Detroit Film Theatre inside the Detroit Institute of Arts.

This year's event is packed with more of what supporters love about Mosaic—Detroit stories told from the perspective of its youth through music and dance. More than 75 talented young artists—ages 12 through 19—will take the stage.

"The first act of the concert features both sacred and secular choral pieces, including spirituals, world music and gospel," says DeLashea Mya Strawder, Mosaic's artistic director of music programs. "In act two, we pay tribute to some of the biggest hits and pop music icons of the '60s through the '80s. Pop music's energetic and story-driven nature highlight the youthful and fun-loving energy that is Mosaic Singers."

"I select the music, rehearse the singers and conduct during the concert. Working with a team of amazing musicians, music educators, coaches and a choreographer, I have the opportunity to make the idea of this musical journey a reality for everyone to share."

Founded by Rick Sperling in 1992, Mosaic was born out of a need to fill the gaps in arts education in metro Detroit schools while providing an artistic home for young actors, singers and stage technicians. Mosaic has trained more than 7,000 Detroit young artists, produced 15 performance tours in Europe, Asia, Africa and the U.S., and created and produced more than 21 original scripts.

As Mosaic celebrates the versatility of the voice during Singsation!, they will perform songs like Greg Jaspers' "Bailando," Kurt Carr's "For Every Mountain" and some big hits from the Jackson family, one of which will be Janet Jackson's "Rhythm Nation."

"I like the second act because it's cool," said 16-year-old Kara Haneline, a Mosaic singer for six years, who will honor Tina Turner by singing

Mosaic's Singsation!

10 a.m. March 1, 8 p.m. March 2-3, 4 p.m. March 4
Detroit Film Theatre
5200 Woodward Avenue
Detroit, MI 48202
(313) 833-7900
www.dia.org
www.mosaicdetroit.org

"Proud Mary." "I wasn't around for the music that we are singing, but I get to be a part of it and its fun. I like that there is such a variety of songs and that they all have meaning."

"I'm super excited about the Singsation! event. The songs, dance and everything is just so amazing and creative. I can't wait," said 12-year-old Nikolas Huey, a Mosaic singer performing for his first year. "My style of singing is gospel and pop. I call it 'gosop.'"

These young artists train intensively with theater professionals for nine months. They have established themselves as a disciplined, professional-level theater company, winning international recognition and awards. They make music, write scripts, build sets and design costumes together.

"The part of Mosaic that I love is the energy and commitment the members and staff bring to performances. Being in Mosaic helps me get better at doing what I love, which is performing," Huey says.

"Mosaic has changed my life by letting me see that everything isn't going to be handed to you. You have to work for it and you can achieve whatever goals you set for yourself," Haneline says.

Mosaic proudly reports that 95 percent of the young artists who participate in Mosaic's Main Stage Training Program graduate high school and go on to college, many with scholarships, which is dramatically above the national average for young people of similar backgrounds.

"I most enjoy seeing how music and performing arts transforms, enlightens and empowers the people that it reaches," Strawder says. "The program provides a platform for young people to be ambassadors of our city and share all of the great things that are happening in it."



Deep Inside Hollywood



BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

Jane Lynch, out of the tracksuit

Admit it, as much as you appreciate her evil one-liners on "Glee," part of you misses the days when Jane Lynch felt more like your own little comedy secret, when she would show up as a

surprise supporting character in films like "The 40 Year Old Virgin" and "Julie & Julia." But with the track suit taking up so much of her time lately, we've seen less and less of her in feature films, so it's nice news to report that she's recently signed on for the indie feature "A.C.O.D." Starring alongside Richard Jenkins ("Eat Pray Love") and Adam Scott ("Parks and Recreation"), Lynch will play "Dr. Judith," a therapist and author – we're imagining Suze Orman meets Dr. Phil – who's experiencing a career downturn and takes on Scott as a patient. Of course, if you can't wait for that one's eventual release to see her on the big screen again, you can always bite the bullet and catch her in this spring's sure-to-be bizarre Farrelly Brothers reboot of "The Three Stooges." And no, Lynch doesn't play Moe.

Matthew Bomer: gay and 'Normal'

Welcome to the 137th update on the decades-long gestating movie adaptation of Larry Kramer's '80s stage classic "The Normal Heart." Now a period piece, the AIDS drama about gay men caught in the wide net of the disease's first, devastating wave has, as reported earlier, found a director in Ryan Murphy and a cast including the now-officially-publicly-gay (as opposed to everybody-on-the-Internet-knew-he-was-already) "White Collar" star Matthew Bomer. Joining him for the angry, sorrowful story is "Big Bang Theory" star (and, for the purposes of this discussion, right now

classified as merely probably-maybe-gay because he won't talk about it) Jim Parsons. And joining them? A powerhouse supporting cast including Julia Roberts, Mark Ruffalo and Alec Baldwin, none of whom have to stumble around the new media glass-closet scenario. Lucky them. And lucky you, the movie will, we hear, finally hit theaters in 2014.

Cherry Jones and B.D. Wong are wide 'Awake'

It's always good news when cool, gay character actors – people whose faces you know because they've been in a million different things on stage, TV and film, the queer version of "Oh hey, it's That Guy" – keep on succeeding. And on NBC's new series "Awake" (premiering March 1) both Cherry Jones ("24") and BD Wong ("Law and Order: Special Victims Unit") get theirs. They both play therapists to Jason Isaacs (Lucius Malfoy in those little-seen "Harry Potter" films), each one determined to convince him that their version of his reality is the truth. Confused? That's because Isaacs plays a man who, depending on whether he's awake or asleep, is living in a reality in which either his wife "or" his son has been killed in a car accident. Which no-win situation should he accept as true? And how does this play out over the course of a series? Who knows right now, but "In Treatment" meets "The Twilight Zone" is just original and weird enough that it ought to meet your DVR's programming queue.

Gay(ish) pilot season casting news: the roundup

Recently, on the hilarious "Happy Endings" (which you should be watching, as it boldly allows its gay male character to be both a layabout slob and to make out with guys with no crazy special-episode build up) "Max" (Adam Pally) kissed Jimmy Wolk. Wolk's name will only be familiar to fans of the cancelled-quickly "Lone Star," but the handsome young actor has also just been cast on Greg Berlanti's ("Brothers and Sisters") drama pilot "Political Animals." So here's hoping it doesn't get "Lone Star" d... Meanwhile, Ellen Barkin has joined the cast of Ryan Murphy and Ali Adler's comedy pilot "The New Normal." She'll play the mother of a woman who becomes involved as a surrogate for a gay male couple trying to have a baby... Kevin Bacon will take on the lead role in Kevin Williamson's still-unnamed pilot about a serial killer using the internet to build a serial-killing cult... And the outcome of a network bidding war sees Portia DeRossi starring in "The Smart One" for ABC. Produced by DeRossi and Ellen DeGeneres, it's a comedy concerning an intelligent, successful woman who goes to work for her sister, a former beauty queen who's now a big-city mayor (and, presumably, not so smart). Start building your scorecards now; pilot season is a tricky beast to keep track of.

Romeo San Vicente has plenty of experience with tricky beasts.

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An unusual feast at The Ringwald

BY JOHN QUINN

The creative minds around town have given us some rare and tasty parodies of famous films – most notably, “*Evil Dead – The Musical*” from Who Wants Cake? and Go! Comedy’s “*RoGoCop – The Musical*. ” But if any film deserved to be eviscerated it’s Joseph L. Mankiewicz’s ham-handed, 1959 adaptation of Tennessee Williams’ “*Suddenly, Last Summer*. ” Despite its pedigree and all-star cast, which includes Elizabeth Taylor and Katharine Hepburn, this is not a good film. Even though Williams got screen credit for the script, he disowned the flick, telling “*The Village Voice*” in 1973 that the film “made [him] throw up” and that the script moved too far away from his original play. Part of that was the director’s attempt to assuage the Production Code Administration over the more controversial themes. Most distressing, though, is the usual cinema attempt to “open up” a play and provide literal interpretations best left to an audience’s imaginations. The result is not unlike a Universal Pictures monster movie. It was half camp already before The Ringwald Theatre chose to spit and roast it as part of its tribute to Elizabeth Taylor, “Liz-a-Palooza.”

Last summer, something terrible happened on a European vacation. Sebastian Venable died under mysterious circumstances, and his niece, Catharine Holly, seems to have been driven insane by the tragedy. Sebastian’s mother, Violet (Lauren Bickers), has her confined in an institution to prevent her from repeating the horror story she babbles. In order to preserve her son’s “chaste” reputation, she calls in the ambitious young Dr. Cukrowicz (Mikey Brown), a specialist in the latest technique in treatment of mental disorders – lobotomy. “You’ve got to cut this hideous story out of her brain,” she demands, and dangles money as bait. Also bribed are Catharine’s mother (Carrie Lynn Hall) and brother (Vince Kelley). Under a truth serum, Catharine reveals the shocking story of her cousin’s death – but is it an objective or subjective account? Is Catharine sane or insane?

Much of the comedy here is derived from overtly playing the sexual tensions implicit in the script, mainly the rivalry between Violet and Catharine for Sebastian’s attention that is later



Marke Sobolewski stars in “*Suddenly, Last Summer*” at The Ringwald. Photo: Colleen Scribner

REVIEW

Suddenly, Last Summer

The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Plays in repertory through March 11. \$10-20. 248-545-5545.

www.TheRingwald.com

transferred to the good doctor. Some of the action is over-the-top burlesque; most of it is well-planned satire. I sense that director Joe Plambeck and his cast made this a collaborative effort and their investment pays off handsomely. The elfin Genevieve Jona, as Sister Felicity, Catharine’s escort from the institution, sets the benchmark here for camp performances.

And what are we to say about that most important character, the tortured Catharine Holly? First and foremost, she’s played by Marke Sobolewski. While that’s a great visual gag – even in sensible heels, he towers over his colleagues – something more is afoot. He’s not really aping Taylor; Sobolewski is actually playing the character, albeit for laughs. About half-way through the semi-climactic, revelation monologue, the performer dispenses with the frivolity, and begins (if you will excuse the expression) to play it straight. Despite the raven black wig, the white dress and

heels, I forgot the female impersonation and reveled in the match of an actor’s craft to playwright’s intent. It’s a remarkable achievement.

I’ve never been able to agree with the common exegesis of “*Suddenly, Last Summer*. ” I wholly disagree with director Mankiewicz’s dismissal that the play was “based on the most elementary Freudian psychology,” even though Williams had just unsuccessfully endured psychotherapy. If there is any identification between the playwright and his phantom character, it lies in the name “Sebastian,” Christian martyr. I think “Summer” is as close as the playwright came to writing dark comedy. I’ve likened the relationship between artist and critic to the eternal enmity between mongoose and cobra. Both critics and cobras are all venom and fangs, but in nature, the mongoose triumphs. Not so in the arts, where the critic always gets in the last bite. I think Williams was fed up feeding spoiled brats on the largesse of his genius, only to have them turn around the next day and rip him to shreds in the papers – or, for followers in his footsteps, websites.

Scholarly badinage is all well and good, but nothing to lose one’s head over. There are laughs to be shared at The Ringwald this month, which seems like the natural order of things.



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Editor's Picks

Outings



AIDS Walk Detroit and award-winning furniture and gift store Leon & Lulu are hosting a kick-off reception March 1 to mark the beginning of this year's push to provide financial support for programs in HIV prevention, education and services.

Founded in 1991, AIDS Walk Detroit has raised \$3.5 million to benefit HIV/AIDS services throughout Michigan. In support of AIDS Walk Detroit, 10 percent of all sales at Leon & Lulu and all raffle and tip money raised during the event benefit AIDS Walk Detroit. Courtesy of Whole Foods and Best Buy, two of the walk's sponsors, appetizers and a video display of AIDS Walk information will be provided at the reception.

The reception is at 6 p.m. March 1 at Leon & Lulu, 96 W. 14 Mile Road in Clawson. A presentation at 7 p.m. will debut this year's theme and premiere the new AIDS Walk Detroit App for the iPhone. For more information, call 248-288-3600 or go to leonandlulu.com.

Theater



The Spotlight Still Got It Players navigate new literary territory as they present "The Oldest Profession" March 1-4 at The Village Theater at Cherry Hill in Canton. This funny, heartwarming and shocking play will be presented in the intimate setting of the Biltmore Studio. It is rated R, so don't bring the little ones!

As Ronald Reagan enters the White House, five aging practitioners of the oldest profession are faced with a diminishing clientele, increased competition for their niche market and aching joints. With wit, compassion and humor they struggle to find and learn new tricks as they fight to stay in the life.

Says Debbie Lannen, director of the all-senior acting ensemble: "Rehearsals have kept me laughing, but also at times I need to wipe tears from my eyes."

Tickets are \$11-\$15. For tickets, call the box office at 734-394-5460. The Village Theater is located at 50400 Cherry Hill Road in Canton.

OUTINGS

Thursday, March 1

Legal Referral Services 4 p.m. Weekly advocacy program and referral services provided by AJ Skillman. AJ Skillman P.C., 290 W. 9 Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

AIDS Walk Detroit Kickoff Reception 6 p.m. This event will mark the beginning of this year's push to provide financial support for programs in HIV prevention, education, and services. AIDS Walk Detroit, 96 W. 14 Mile Road, Clawson. 248-288-3600. Shop@leonandlulu.com leonandlulu.com

GLBT Professionals Network Happy Hour 6 p.m. Socialize and beverages with other LGBT & Allied Professionals from the Kalamazoo area. KGLRC, 629 Pioneer St., Kalamazoo. 269-349-4234. Kglrc.org

Matts for MATTS Fundraiser 6:30 p.m. Tickets: \$100 per person. Proceeds to benefit CALC's Mattress Fund. The Chaldean American Ladies of Charity, 2955 Northwestern Hwy, Southfield. 248-538-8300. Denhamedema.com

Men's Film Group 7 p.m. Social group to view and discuss films of interest to men. Film: Prayers for Bobby, 2009. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Friday, March 2

Womyn's Film Night 7 p.m. Film: Ellen DeGeneres: The Beginning; Filmed live at the Beacon Theatre in New York in 2000, Ellen DeGeneres makes her long-anticipated return to stand-up comedy. Riffing on everything from filming your sex life to what to do when you forget someone's name, Ellen brings down the house. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

S.P.I.C.E. 7:30 p.m. S.P.I.C.E. works to empower and enhance the lives of women of color in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Questioning community in Metropolitan Detroit, by eradicating the health, social and educational barriers facing them. Meetings are on the first Friday of every month. S.P.I.C.E., 290 W. 9 Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Saturday, March 3

D-Funk Allstars vs. The Pistolwhippers 5 p.m. See two Detroit Derby Girls home teams-The D-Funk Allstars and The Pistolwhippers-face off at the Masonic Temple on Saturday, March 3. Tickets: \$15. Detroit Derby Girls, 500 Temple St., Detroit. 313-832-7100. Events@detroitderbygirls.com Detroitderbygirls.com/schedule.html

Wintergreen Euchre 6 p.m. A friendly card game and a social outing for Womyn of all ages, meeting the first Saturday. No RSVP or partner is needed. There is a \$5 donation. Arrive a little early to get settled in and registered for a seat. Wintergreen Euchre, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. Home.comcast.net/~vern909/site/

Sunday, March 4

GOAL Book Club 4 p.m. GOAL's monthly book club will be reading "Swampplandia." GOAL, 1515 S Washington, Royal Oak. 248-515-2551. Getoutandlive.me

Conversation Station 5 p.m. Meets every Sunday for good discussions and good food. For any LGBTQI or ally over 25. This week's topic: If you were to write a book, what would the title be? Get Out And Live!, 714 S Washington, Royal Oak. 248-981-4227. GetOutAndLive.me

Monday, March 5

Next Generation of Leaders Youth Group

4 p.m. Part of the Saginaw programming for the National Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS. New Birth Missionary Baptist Church, Pastor Larry Camel. Hosting prayer, devotion, information and discussion on HIV prevention. Open to youth and parents. Saginaw HIV/AIDS Task Force, 310 S. Washington St., Saginaw. 989-753-9011.

Discussion and Workshop: Bible texts and care-filled sex 5:30 p.m. Dr. Taylor Petrey, assistant professor of religion at Kalamazoo College, will hold a workshop and discussion of what the Bible does, and doesn't say, about human sexuality. Kalamazoo Faith Alliance, 327 Gull Road, Kalamazoo. Officecpchum.org kgirc.com

Tuesday, March 6

Evening Prayer and Discussion 7 p.m. Part of the Saginaw programming for the National Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS. Saginaw Community Christian Reformed Church, Pastor Nathan Gritter hosts a reading of Prayer Intention Cards. Open to all. Saginaw HIV/AIDS Task Force, 6045 Mackinaw, Kochville Township, Saginaw. 989-753-9011.

Wednesday, March 7

My Denomination's View on HIV/AIDS 12 p.m. Part of the Saginaw programming for the National Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS. Supported by Gospel against AIDS. Interfaith forum and discussion is open to all. Saginaw HIV/AIDS Task Force, 501 Lapeer, Saginaw. 989-753-9011.

Wild Wednesday 5 p.m. A supportive LGBT youth group that meets every Wednesday. All youth are welcome. Dedicated to Make a Change, L3C, 319 Braun Ct., Ann Arbor. 734-657-1792. Gailwolkoff@gmail.com Dedicatedtomakeachange.com

Chen Style Tai Chi (QiDong) 6 p.m. Provided by Shaolin Master Mesan Williams through April. Program may continue if interest follows. For more information, contact Director of Programs at J.Jenkins@GoAffirmations.org. Shaolin Master Mesan Williams, 290 W. 9 Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

GOAL Travel Trip Planning Session 6:30 p.m. Get Out and Live are planning their first group trip and have chosen Sonoma Valley as their destination. Join GOAL on their trip and start planning the itinerary. GOAL, 290 W. 9 Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Getoutandlive.me

In Commemoration 7 p.m. Part of the Saginaw community's programming for the National Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS. St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Pastor Judy Boli host prayer and worship service in commemoration of National Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS, open to all. Saginaw HIV/AIDS Task Force, 2720 Tuscola, Saginaw. 989-753-9011.

Men's Film Group 7 p.m. Social group to view and discuss films of interest to men. Film: Spinnin', 2007. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Friday, March 9

White House LGBT Conference on Housing & Homelessness 8:30 a.m. The White House LGBT Conference on Housing & Homelessness will provide advocates, community leaders, and members of the public an opportunity to engage with the Obama Administration on housing and homelessness issues that impact LGBT Americans. Register online. The White House, Wayne State University, Detroit. LGBT@who.eop.gov.gov.usa.gov/Qvd

Dinner at Mitchell's Fish Market 6:30 p.m. Meet other like-minded people who enjoy

food, friendship and good conversation. Group meets for dinner and socialization at a different restaurant on the second Friday of each month. Plymouth Lesbian Supper Meetup Group, 17600 Haggerty Road, Livonia. 734-464-3663. Meetup.com/Plymouth-Lesbian-Supper-Group/

Older Lesbians Organizing 7 p.m. Provides older Lesbians with the chance to meet like minded women in their common struggles, to share mutual interests and to play and work together. Meets the 2nd Friday of every month. Older Lesbians Organizing, 319 Braun Court, Ann Arbor. 734-678-2478. jasmithers@sbcglobal.net

Prayer Intention Cards 7 p.m. Part of the Saginaw community's programming for the National Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS. Saginaw Community Christian Reformed Church, Pastor Nathan Gritter hosts a reading of Prayer Intention Cards. Open to all. Saginaw HIV/AIDS Task Force, 6045 Mackinaw, Kochville Township, Saginaw. 989-753-9011.

Womyn's Film Night 7 p.m. Film: The Edge of Heaven; Faith Akin, the critically-acclaimed director of Head-On, weaves overlapping tales of friendship and sexuality into a powerful narrative of universal love. Affirmations, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Saturday, March 10

National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day 11 a.m. Sponsored by the Saginaw County HIV/AIDS Task Force. Sharing of poetry expressions regarding HIV/AIDS. Saginaw HIV/AIDS Task Force, 210 S. Washington St., Saginaw. 989-753-9011.

Community Showcase: A Benefit for the Ypsilanti Ozone House 6:30 p.m. Local performers are set to take the stage for the Community Showcase benefit concert for the Ypsilanti Ozone House. Suggested Donation of \$10. All proceeds will benefit the Ypsi Ozone House and its programs for at-risk youth. Ypsilanti Ozone House, 120 N. Huron St., Ypsilanti. 734-662-2265.

Motor City Bears 7 p.m. Monthly meeting for on every second Saturday. Motor City Bears, 290 W. Nine Mile Road, Ferndale. 248-398-7105. Goaffirmations.org

Shall We Dance? 7:30 p.m. Refreshments, snacks, door prizes, lesson and open dancing. Admission: \$10. Gay & Lesbian Ballroom & Free Style dance, 247 West. Nine Mile Rd., Ferndale. 248-288-7624. bonjourvous4@yahoo.com

Drag Queen Bingo 8 p.m. "This ain't your grandma's bingo." Hosts Sabin, Trixie Deluxe or September Murphy. Open to all 18+. Refreshments and bingo food fare. Reservations available by phone. Five15, 515 S. Washington, Royal Oak. 248-515-2551. Five15.net

Equality Michigan ComedyFest 8 p.m. Join comedians Chantal Carrere, Erin Foley, Chris Doucette, and Diane Amos for an outstanding night of comedy. With a new single-show format this year, tickets are bound to sell quickly. Tickets: \$35. Equality Michigan, 15801 Michigan Ave., Dearborn. 313-934-2354. Comedyfest.eventbrite.com

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Always ... Patsy Cline \$16-22. Center Stage Theatre at Midland Center for the Arts, 1801 W. St. Andrews Road, Midland. March 9-18. 989-631-5930. mcfta.org

11-March 11. 734-994-0211. Arboropera.com/cabaret.html

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "Civic Orchestra: Stravinsky's Petrushka" Artistic Director Tickets: \$12. Max M. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. 8 p.m. March 2. 313-576-5111. Dso.org

Detroit Symphony Orchestra "A Sci-Fi Spectacular" Renowned pops conductor Jack Everly performs Star Wars, Star Trek, Close Encounters of the Third Kind, The Day the Earth Stood Still and more. Complete with an appearance by Mr. Sulu himself, George Takei. Tickets: \$19. Max M. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit. March 9-March 11. 313-576-5111. Dso.org

Kerrytown Concert House "Cheek to Cheek" Sandra Bernhard and Tony Camilletti celebrate jazz hits popularized by the hipsters of the 1940s-1960s. Featuring songs of Irving Berlin, George and Ira Gershwin, and more. Tickets: \$10-25 general, \$5 students. Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N. 4th Ave., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. March 9. 734-769-2999. Kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Lansing Symphony Orchestra "MasterWorks 5: Brahms Piano Concerto No. 2" Debussy's Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun, followed by Strauss's tone poem, Death and Transfiguration, a classic of late Romanticism, and concluding with Brahms's second piano concerto. Wharton Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing. 8 p.m. March 10. 517-353-1982 ext. 14. Lansingsymphony.org

MCBB Festival of Bands "Motor City Brass Band" Tickets: \$12 adults, \$10 seniors and students. Ford Community and Performing Arts Center, 15801 Michigan Ave., Dearborn. 2 p.m. March 11. 248-788-6618. Mcbb.org

Royal Oak Music Theatre "TYGA: The Careless World Tour" Careless World: Rise of the Last King is the major label debut studio album by American rapper Tyga. Tickets: \$25. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W Fourth St, Royal Oak. 7 p.m. March 13. 248-399-2980. Royaloakmusictheatre.com

The Ark "Catie Curtis" Tickets: \$20. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. March 2. 734-761-1818. Theark.org

The Ark "Jeremy Kittel Band" Tickets: \$15. The Ark, 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. 8 p.m. March 15. 734-761-1818. Theark.org

Wellspring Cori Terry & Dancers "Third Annual Midwest Regional Alternative Dance Festival" Third annual Midwest Regional Alternative Dance Festival (RAD Fest) RAD Fest features the best in cutting edge modern and contemporary dance. Wellspring Theater in the Epic Center, 359 S. Kalamazoo Mall, Kalamazoo, 9 a.m. March 2. 269-342-4354. Midwestradfest.org

MUSIC & MORE

Arbor Opera Theater "Le Vie De Boheme" Annual fundraising Cabaret will once again be hosted by the superb restaurant, The Earle Downtown. Admission: \$25 general, \$40 prime seating. The Earle, 121 W. Washington St., Ann Arbor. March

11-March 11. 734-994-0211. Arboropera.com/cabaret.html

Interrogation \$5-20. Windsor Pride Community at St. Clair College Center for the Arts at the Chrysler Theatre, 201 Riverside Dr., Windsor. March 6-7. 519-973-4656.

For expanded listings & to add a listing, visit our website

Moon Over Buffalo \$12. SRO Productions at Historic Burgh, 26060 Berg Road, Southfield. March 2-18. 248-796-4645. srotheater.org

The Last Five Years \$14. Stagecrafters at Baldwin Theatre, 415 S. Lafayette Ave., Royal Oak. March 2-18. 248-541-6430. Stagecrafters.org

The Oldest Profession \$11-15. Still Got It Players at The Village Theater at Cherry Hill, 50400 Cherry Hill Rd., Canton. March 1-4. 734-394-5460. canton-mi.org/villagetheater

The Skin I'm In \$10. Matrix Theatre, 2730 Bagley, Detroit. March 2-11. 313-967-0999. MatrixTheatre.org

What Corbin Knew \$10. The Penny Seats at The Mosh Pit at Performance Network Theatre, 120 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. Through March 14. 734-663-0681. performancenetwork.org

PROFESSIONAL

Burying the Bones \$17-20. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson, Detroit. Through March 18. 313-368-1347. detroitreptheatre.com

Elizabeth the Beautiful \$10-20. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Plays in repertory through March 12. 248-545-5545. TheRingwald.com

Four Score and Seven Years Ago \$10. Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, 44575 Garfield Road, Clinton Township. March 2. 586-286-2222. macombcenter.com

Frank Langella's Cyrano \$12-30. The Hilberry Theatre, 4743 Cass Ave., Detroit. Through March 20. 313-577-2972. hilberry.com

Love, Loss, and What I Wore \$49.50. Gem Theatre, 333 Madison Ave., Detroit. Through March 4. 313-963-9800. BroadwayinDetroit.com

Over the River and Through the Woods \$16. Broadway Onstage, 21517 Kelly Road, Eastpointe. Through March 24. 586-771-6333. broadwayonstage.com

Shrek The Musical \$29-79. Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit. Through March 11. 313-872-1000. broadwayindetroit.com

Sister's Easter Catechism: \$42-52. Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, Macomb Center for the Performing Arts, 44575 Garfield Road, Clinton Township. March 10. 586-286-2222. MacombCenter.com

South Pacific \$30-70. Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit. March 2-4. 313-471-6611. olympiaentertainment.com

Suddenly Last Summer \$10-20. The Ringwald Theatre, 22742 Woodward Ave., Ferndale. Plays in repertory through March 11. 248-545-5545. TheRingwald.com

Ann Arbor Art Center "John Schultz Artworks" This collection of oil paintings is a study of color and the relationship of one to another. Ann Arbor Art Center, 117 W. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. Feb. 1-March 2. 734-994-8004. Ann Arbor Art Center.

Ariana Gallery "Black History Month: African Art" Contemporary and traditional work by artists and artisans who are

recognized locally and internationally will be on display. Ariana Gallery, 119 S. Main St., Royal Oak. Feb. 17-March 17. 248-546-8810. ArianaGallery.com

Gallery Project "American Dream" A multimedia exhibit in which 29 local, regional, and national artists explore how hopeful narratives of the American experience is changing. Gallery Project, 215 S. Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. Jan. 25-March 4. 734-997-7012. Thegalleryproject.com

Kerrytown Concert House "Sara Innes, Paintings and Takeshi Takahara, Printmaker" Kerrytown Concert House, 415 N Fourth Ave., Ann Arbor. Feb. 28-March 30. 734-769-2999. Kerrytownconcerthouse.com

Lawrence Street Gallery "No Going Back" Lawrence Street Gallery, 22620 Woodward Ave. Suite A, Ferndale. Feb. 29-March 30. 248-544-0394. Lawrencestreetgallery.com

Leon & Lulu "Spring Artists' Market Day" Celebrating local artists' work. No admission fee to attend or exhibit. Leon & Lulu, 96 W. 14 Mile Road, Clawson. 11 a.m. March 4 and 6. 248-288-3600. Leonandlulu.com/index.php/articles/view/spring_2012_artist_market

Michigan State University Museum "On Equal Terms" A new exhibit at the Michigan State University Museum takes a look at tradeswomen's 30-year struggle for access and equality in the construction industry. Michigan State University Museum, West Circle Drive, East Lansing. Feb. 5-May 13. Facebook.com/MSUMuseum

Riverside Arts Center "The Life and Times of the Pine" Paintings and drawings for this show started with a story about the life and times of a pine cone, and then

continued on to include other landscapes and studies of and with pines. Riverside Arts Center, 76 N. Huron St., Ypsilanti. March 1-March 31. 734-480-2787. Riversidearts.org

University of Michigan Museum of Art "Fluxus and the Essential Questions of Life" Fluxus emerged in the early 1960s as a loose, international network of artists, composers, and designer led by Lithuanian-born American artist George Maciunas that was noted for blurring the boundaries between art and life. University Of Michigan Museum Of Art, 525 S. State St., Ann Arbor. Feb. 25-May 20. 734-764-0395. Umma.umich.edu

Wyandotte Arts Center "Maea Annual Exhibit" Michigan Art Education Association Region 2 Annual Exhibit: Grades K-12. Located in the Lower Level Gallery, Wyandotte Arts Center, 81 Chestnut Road, Wyandotte. Feb. 21-March 2. 734-720-0671. Downriverarts.org

Yellow Door Art Market "Art Fair Fever at Yellow Door" Stop by Yellow Door to meet many of our artists, receive 15% off most items, and enjoy Michigan refreshments throughout the day. Yellow Door Art Market, 3141 W. 12 Mile Rd., Berkley. 9 a.m. March 10. 248-336-2038. Yellowdoormarket.com/yellowdoor/2012/02/art-fair-fever-saturday-march-10.html

Yourist Studio Gallery "Serving It Up Just Desserts!" A juried exhibition of ceramic dessert ware by Michigan potters, including a special show of vintage-style aprons. Admission: free. Yourist Studio Gallery, 1133 Broadway St., Ann Arbor. March 1-April 8. 734-665-5696. Youristpottery.com

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Sunday - March 18

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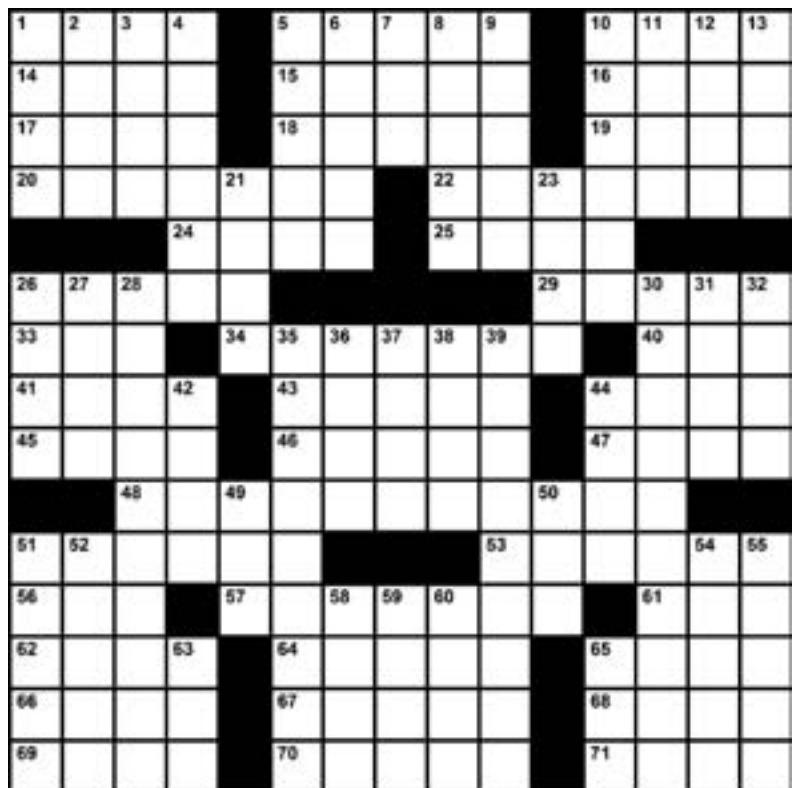
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Across

- 1 Tune type
 5 See 48-Across and 57-Across
 10 Did the vocals
 14 Like Saint Joan, say
 15 Speedy train
 16 Food thickening agent
 17 Julia Morgan wings
 18 Ophelia and Hamlet or Claire
 19 New Rochelle, N.Y. college
 20 International Mr. ____
 22 John of _Arthur_
 24 Top-flight
 25 "Here ____ go?"
 26 With 29-Across, Will Ferrell's humor web site
 29 See 26-Across
 33 Mil. hangout
 34 Suckers
 40 Classic TV
 41 "West Side Story" gang
 43 Be a snitch
 44 Places to discover the "gay gene"
 45 Lesbos, e.g.
 46 Bow on the screen
 47 "All ____" (1984 Tomlin film)
 48 With 5-Across, Guerrilla TV show
 51 "Cancer in Two Voices" co-author Butler

53 Tavern with naked dancers?

- 56 Fag follower
 57 With 5-Across, veteran of the comedy venues of this puzzle
 61 Bullring bravo
 62 Like phone sex?
 64 N.F.L. coach Don
 65 Sonny and Cher's "I Got You ____"
 66 It covered Caesar's Johnson
 67 Track athlete
 68 First name in Dodger pitching
 69 Type of balls
 70 Harold's facial marks in "The Boys in the Band"
 71 Poems of Sappho

Down

- 1 Silverstein of kiddie lit
 2 "Baby Doll" band
 3 Spanish cooking pot
 4 Auden's first name
 5 Former German state
 6 Words of empathy
 7 Sportscaster Berman
 8 Hispanic family org.
 9 Chairman Arafat
 10 Jack-tar
 11 With mouth wide open
 12 When doubled, Mork's good-bye

- 13 New alum
 21 Singer/songwriter Axton
 23 Alfred Douglas' school
 26 Honshu peak
 27 Treats as a sexual object
 28 In the recent past
 30 It used to take unwilling men
 31 Silo contents, for short
 32 Smooth sailing
 35 Boys that don't like girls, and others
 36 Hardy cabbage
 37 JFK predictions
 38 Put into slots
 39 Like a debt-ridden top?
 42 Tickle pink
 44 Theater chain name
 49 Threesome for Michelangelo
 50 Stud site
 51 Doses in the rear
 52 Composer Copland
 54 "Seascape" author
 55 Rods' partners
 58 Like a Marc Jacobs ensemble
 59 Oahu dance
 60 NY Met or LA Dodger
 63 Perry Mason's field
 65 Radley of "To Kill a Mockingbird"

Solution on p. 29

Pet of the Week



Say hello to Myrtle!

This 4-year-old longhaired cat has brown tiger-colored fur that will need brushing once or twice every week. Affectionate and playful, Myrtle will come seeking a good scratch from her new best friend. Come meet her today. You'll be glad you did! The adoption fee includes microchipping, sterilization, age-appropriate vaccinations and much more! For more information, please contact the Michigan Humane Society's Berman Center for Animal Care in Westland at (734) 721-7300 and provide the pet ID number, 709945. Photo by Heidi Waeschle-Gabel.

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Horoscopes

Push through the fog, Cancer!

BY JACK FERTIG

Sun in Pisces opposing Mars in Virgo starts lots of picky, whiney, hyper-critical arguments. Put aside your own "needs" and offer what you can to others.

ARIES (March 20 – April 19): Relationships are hard work, and work consists largely of managing hard relationships. Staying calm, focused and cooperative on the task ahead is a real challenge. Keep faultfinding to yourself; be mature, stoic and farsighted. It will get easier next week.

TAURUS (April 20 – May 20): Friends can feel like they're more trouble than they're worth. That's when it's time to go hide and relax. Social obligations at work can be especially difficult. Prioritize; do what you must and save time to recharge your batteries.

GEMINI (May 21- June 20): You could figure out a way to make the impossible work with a balance of inspiration and practicality. That crazy idea that comes out of nowhere could be the key. Test it before you commit, but at least check it out.

CANCER (June 21- July 22): New ideas and situations can be overwhelming, even confusing. Resist temptation to retreat into quiet, familiar escapes. Push through the fog. Not only can you rise to the occasion, but you will find the effort rewarding.

LEO (July 23 – August 22): Efforts to smooth over problems will backfire big time. Face the music and deal with it. Rather than using your charm to sweep things under the rug, put that sunshine to work rallying support for a real solution.

VIRGO (August 23 – September 22): Even the best intended advice, especially if it is from your partner or about your relationship, can go very wrong. Pay attention and receive it politely. If it sounds like a good idea, consider it very carefully before acting on it.

Jack Fertig, a professional astrologer since 1977, is available for personal and business consultations in person in San Francisco, or online everywhere. He can be reached at 415-864-8302, through his website at www.starjack.com, and by email at QScopes@qsyndicate.com.

LIBRA (September 23 – October 22): Don't take anything for granted. It may seem tedious work to spell out all the little details, but it is worth the trouble. The less you boast of your experience and confidence, the more attractive they will make you.

SCORPIO (October 23 – November 21): Some of your friends aren't really. Losing them without creating trouble can be challenging. Be gentle and polite. If they accuse you of being overly-critical, smile agreeably. That's just a harsh way of saying you have higher standards.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 – December 20): You're on a power surge for a couple of weeks. It could build momentum at work and push you into a better job. If you are considering any big risks with your work, this is the time to take them, but think ahead!

CAPRICORN (December 21 – January 19): Your goals are becoming more realistic, but you still need clarification and to get your ego out of the way. Negatives overshadow the issue now. Bring those to light; get them out of the way. Soon you'll see the positives more clearly.

AQUARIUS (January 20 – February 18): Your love of a good argument can get you into big trouble. Seriously, this time it could cost you. Be restrained and pragmatic; keep your ears open. Elicit information, but don't contradict. You could learn something very useful, even profitable.

PISCES (February 19 – March 19): A lover's spat can become a major disaster. Perhaps you are being too critical. Focus on being a better partner. That might mean allowing a bit of space, being less co-dependent. Enjoy your birthday, but impulse spending would prove surprisingly expensive.

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Solution to puzzle from page 28

I	L	S	A	C	R	E	S	G	U	T	S
N	O	U	N	D	O	O	N	E	A	N	W
D	A	N	E	L	R	A	D	C	L	I	F
I	T	T	M	A	N	D	A	T	E	A	L
C	H	A	M	O	I	S	T	E	L	I	O
T	E	N	E	T	E	A	T	E	D	N	R

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Gay skate rolls into metro Detroit

Local clubs host monthly LGBT roller-skating event at Farmington Hills' Bonaventure



BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Boys in booty shorts zooming around in rollerskates was the scene last week, as Menjo's and Backstreet – two of Detroit's iconic gay clubs – took over Bonaventure in Farmington Hills for a skating party.

"We were thrilled at how well the community embraced this first-time party," said Murray Hodgson, owner of both bars.

Over a hundred and fifty people – from roller-skating newbies to seasoned middle-aged pros who were living out their teen years again (props to the older man flying solo!) – skated around to a mix of music from yesterday and today. And they did it in typical gay fashion.

"Luckily this was a private party, because apparently we broke every 'dress code' rule posted on the rink's wall," said Hodgson. "Wigs, pumps, feather boas, booty shorts, muscle boys

and a drag queen somewhere in between. Oh, and guys using the ladies bathroom. It's kind of hard standing at the urinal on roller skates!"

The inaugural gay skate – the first of many, hopes Hodgson – was organized to hold an event for the LGBT community outside of the club scene.

"We see the population of our local community decreasing as many move out-of-state for better opportunities," he said. "We must unite together and be realistic about our expectations for gay entertainment. So many people have asked us to do something in Oakland county, so we strapped on the blades."

And you have another opportunity to strap them on from 9 p.m.-2 a.m. March 28 at Bonaventure Skate at 24505 Halsted Road in Farmington Hills. Attendees must be 18 and, in case you've already conquered sober skating, a full bar will be on hand if you're looking for a challenge.

Clockwise from top left: Crystal and Kevin. Jessica and Georgia. Rob, Casey and Jacob. Photos: Chris Azzopardi



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Limo Service:

Satisfaction Limousines is offering a 13% discount to Spring Bash goers on the evening of the event. Check out the hot pink H2 Hummer stretch or red hot Chrysler 300! Call (586) 725-7799 for more info.

For more information about Spring Bash 2012, contact Events & Sponsorship Manager, Mark McMillan at (248) 398-7105 or MMcMillan@GoAffirmations.org

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